Information for Social Change

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Special Issue on
Education for Social Change

Special Issue Editor: Glenn Rikowski

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Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world
Nelson Mandela

Editorial: Education for Social Change

Glenn Rikowski

This issue of *Information for Social Change* is a Special Issue on 'Education for Social Change'. The concept of 'education for social change' suggests something positive, forward-looking and radical – but it need not be so. The social change that is the reference point could be concerned with what Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels called the 'real movement which abolishes the present state of things' (1846, p.57). The 'present state of things' being that we live in capitalist society, the message is clear: education for social change should be about education for the transformation of society, the abolition of capitalist society, the movement towards socialism and the nurturing of communism. In this sense, 'education for social change' is thoroughly *anti-capitalist* education, infused with the values of equality, co-operation and social progress.

Of course, once the notion of social progress, and indeed other values with close ties to the Enlightenment are mentioned, then many postmodernists would cringe and object. For some postmodernists, social progress is a myth, a chimera. At the very least one should take a critical attitude towards 'progress' as a possibility for contemporary societies, according to such postmodernists.

Whilst the postmodern attitude and scepticism regarding social progress can be allied to reaction and quietism (though some postmodernists I know argue that this need not be so), what is clearer is that for New Labour's education policy 'education for social change' has a more sinister and Orwellian meaning. This can be seen most readily in the development of policy for the schools system in England, which will be the focus for the rest of this Editorial discussion.

When New Labourites talk about 'modernising' and 'reforming' schools in England it sounds like that they have a form of education for social change in view which is progressive and uplifting. When they talk about 'radical' change for the education system the message is even more misleading and degenerate. For when representatives of the New Labour government pontificate about education in these ways what they actually have in view is something entirely *retro*, and in some cases antiquated, in terms of the development of capitalism. Thus, measures which encourage the commodification and marketisation of schools, for example (e.g. Education Act 2002) fit neatly into this retromodern perspective. In

practical terms, this involves inviting in private sector operators to run educational services, including services such as equal opportunities and school improvement as well as frontline education services such as teaching. It also includes the management of educational services, for example, running Local Education Authorities (LEAs). Currently, nine LEAs in England are run by companies (see Farnsworth, 2006, p.489). In the outsourcing of educational services in England and in the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) for schools, state revenue is transformed into private profit via the magic of money. Companies siphon off state revenue in often complex and secretive (under the terms of financial confidentiality) ways and turn it into profit. Companies like Serco and W.S Atkins do not want to *own* schools or LEAs; they are not interested in outright privatisation. They want to run them on a contract in such a way that profits can be delivered, and New Labour (as with other governments) is struggling both with the appropriate models and legislative frameworks for facilitating this whilst fending off political opponents and resistance regarding this policy.

Sir Michael Barber poses the issues facing New Labour in its 'reform' of public services in a recent article in the *Financial Times* (Barber, 2006). Barber outlines three models for public service delivery in a contemporary situation where, according to him, people want better public services but do not want to pay higher taxes. Barber notes that if governments want to satisfy demanding yet penny-pinching and hyper-critical customers in the realm of public services, then they should pursue all three of these models, to varying degrees.

The first model is what Barber calls the 'command and control model' which involves targets, heavy inspection and monitoring and diktats. In schools in England, this can be seen in the consolidation of Tory education policy under New Labour, with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the National Curriculum and SATs all retained. New Labour brought in additional 'command and control' aspects of education policy such as the Numeracy and Literacy Hours for primary schools.

The second model is:

> ...to create quasi-markets, as in current health and education reforms in the UK: devolution of responsibility to schools, GPs and foundation hospitals; more choice for parents and patients and the introduction of alternative providers of schools and health services. The aim is to recognise that while these services are different from businesses in that they are universal and equitable, they are similar in management terms (Barber, 2006).

This second model is connected to the various *marketising* education policies of the UK government. These policies seek to

deep competition between schools in various ways (who market their products) and to turn parents and students into customers competing for places and qualifications. Again, the education policies of the Conservative administrations of the 1980s and 1990s, with increased parental choice, league tables (for SATs, GCSE and A-level results), funding linked to pupil numbers and devolution of budgets to schools, facilitated the development of education quasi-markets in the schools system. And again, New Labour consolidated and built upon these 'reforms'. The Schools White Paper of October 2005 (Her Majesty's Government, 2005) was a key marketising document for New Labour in terms of deepening parental choice and instituting Trust schools as 'independent state schools'. As Jane Coles (2005 and 2006) has indicated, New Labour rhetoric about 'choice' and 'diversity' camouflages attempts to develop educational marketisation further, which, if left unchecked, would only exacerbate divisions, inequalities and injustices in the schools system in England. However, the backlash against the White Paper, from within and beyond the Labour Party, resulted in a watered-down Education and Inspections Bill and a Consultation on a strengthened Code of Admissions which have the potential to significantly curtail the marketising measures within the White Paper.

Barber's (2006) third model involves the government contracting out or delegating to services providers, and holds them responsible for service performance. Outsourcing of LEAs to companies can be included here. This model has been applied sparingly within the schools sector to date, and given the hostility of trade unions and, in some cases parents' groups to this policy, then we may have to wait for David Cameron's Tories to take it further; in this case 'building' on New Labour 'reforms'.

What I have called the 'business takeover of schools' involves principally the third model. However, the *capitalisation* of schools, policies and processes which reconstitute schools as value creating and profit-making centres which produce educational services as *commodities* (see Rikowski, 2005), also involves the second model. The capitalisation of schools incorporates both marketisation and commodification of educational services, a point often ignored by the educational Left. Indeed, in terms of setting contracts where money is clawed back from companies if targets are not met, there are elements of command and control too.

In essence, the capitalisation of schools establishes a situation where schools are under the command of capital yet not owned by individual companies. The capitalist state regulates competition and contracts that can ultimately be taken away from particular

companies and handed to others if service targets are not met. Whilst these arrangements are complex and appear to be 'modernising' processes and practices, they unleash capital into areas that were previously embedded within the domain of the state, albeit a capitalist state. It therefore constitutes a kind of primitive capitalism, an opening up of a new frontier to capital. Thus: the process is thoroughly *retro*-modern.

Retromodernism is where policies are presented as 'modern' and 'reforming' but are essentially throwbacks to a situation where capital and its representatives have more power and control, or where value creation and profit making are nurtured and developed. This can also be seen in education policy regarding the Academies in England. These schools are sponsored by 'philanthropists' of various kinds – including business ones. Sponsors put in £2 million towards start-up costs and then gain considerable power over staff conditions, and, most importantly, school ethos, with the power to insert religious and business-oriented values and prejudices into the curriculum. Notions of philanthropy and charity permeate the Academies as throwbacks to the nineteenth century, and further back. Again, purportedly 'modern' policies are thoroughly retro. The same is true of the Trust schools, which are echoes of the Tories' Grant Maintained Schools, themselves reminiscent of the old Direct Grant Schools and further back to some of the old grammar schools that were turned into private schools. Thus: not so much back to the future as forward to the past (see Baker, 2005).

Education for progressive social change, on the other hand, is not tied to mortgaging our children's future to capital and its human representatives. Rather, it is tied to human progress and a future beyond capital. It is a truly modern, not retromodern, system of education that puts the well-being of all at the centre of its activities and not the demands of capital, the capitalist or ruling classes or ruling elites at the top of the educational agenda. Education for progressive social change is subversive of the constitution of the vast majority of current educational practices, processes and institutions. It is also education for environmental and social sustainability. It is an education that has a future.

The Contributions

Of course, it cannot be expected that all the contributors to this issue would agree with all or even most of the above. Indeed, these ideas reflect the experiences and biography of a particular person and his encounters with capitalist society and educational institutions, and with a very particular family background and

educational, social and political experience, and how he reacted to and made sense of these. Nevertheless, the articles in this Special Issue all touch on aspects of the above account on the notion of education for social change.

This is most clear in the first article, by **Dave Hill**. Hill indicates how neoliberal and neoconservative education policies not only reproduce, bolster and aid the capitalist system to maintain itself and to expand, but also play a key role on the constitution of the class system. Hill discloses some uncomfortable data on income and wealth distribution in the United States and the United Kingdom, and how the education systems of these countries function to maintain and indeed extend these inequalities, as well as to legitimise them. He unravels the various capitalist plans and agendas for education and how the current education system functions ideologically to support a whole host of divisions: class, 'race' and gender divisions being particularly important. Finally, Hill also examines how contemporary, globalising, neoliberal and neoconservative capitalist education impacts on those who work in education institutions. Yet he ends on an optimistic and positive note by indicating how groups of workers have resisted these trends.

For an aspiring teacher who happens to be Left-wing in their outlook, the issue of how they reconcile their socialist, egalitarian and radical views with the disciplines and self-restrictions necessary to function as a teacher in England today is a crucial one. **Alison Tuffs**, in the second article, poses the question of whether such reconciliation can be reached, or indeed is worth reaching. Ultimately, the question is to teach or not to teach. On the other hand, should education become the preserve of rather conformist folk imbued with the spirit of technicism, just doing 'what works'? Should only pragmatists and rule-followers teach in our schools? Tuffs explores these issues through drawing on personal experience, a range of philosophers (especially those from the Anarchist tradition) and educational research. In the process, Tuffs raises further significant questions about the ways schools actually work. Tuffs concludes that maintaining educational ideals is essential for Left-wing teachers: even if so many forces and factors within the educational system seem to undermine these. Furthermore, for progressive educational change to take place, such teachers, in substantial numbers, are a necessity in our schools today.

In the third article, **Glenn Rikowski** argues that education for progressive social change is linked to a politics that hammers away at capital's weakest link, which, for him, is labour power: the capacity to labour. This is because capitalist society *depends for its*

existence and expansion on the transformation of labour power into actual labour in the capitalist labour process for the creation of value, surplus-value and ultimately profit. Unfortunately, for the capitalist and for human representatives of capital, labour power is a social force in the possession of labourers. It is under the rule of potentially hostile wills. This makes it capital's weakest link: labour has to be coaxed, cajoled and ultimately forced out of labourers for the system to survive; and it is this fact that makes labour power, our capacity to labour, which resides within us, capital's weakest link. Capitalist education and training play key roles in the social production of labour power. Thus, a politics of human resistance can be generated that focuses on the critique of the form that labour power takes, and critiques of its social production through education and training and to explore ways in which labour power might figure in non-capitalist production (together with the associated education and training). This politics of human resistance, argues Rikowski, should be the focus of socialist strategy and thinking – an unlikely prospect at the current time.

However, to shift education and training away from supporting the constitution of contemporary society and towards a concern with human well-being and social progress is not easy. In the next article, **Zapopan Martin Muela-Meza** describes how, in contemporary society state and capital are fusing. He argues that this poses a threat both to democracy and human progress. The forces of commodification and marketisation, nurtured by the corporate state, threaten to hollow-out substantive democracy in contemporary society. This applies to both education and library and information services. Corporations, like capital, are essentially, without and 'beyond' ethics. After Nietzsche, they are 'beyond good and evil'. Muela-Meza's solution is the re-establishment of the public domain, to force corporations under the rule of law; to force them to adopt ethical practices which are alien to their existence. He calls on library and information workers to engage in this struggle, to redefine knowledge, and to rethink their roles and their practices in line with the development of a renaissance and extension of the democratic impulse. He also argues for the 'freeing' of knowledge and information – vital to an education for social change – from the grip of corporations.

Dionyssios Gouvias argues that attempts to recast education for social change in the language and rhetoric of 'lifelong learning' and the 'Learning Society' might be tempting for both education policymakers and teachers and for those on the educational Left. However, this beguiling rhetoric is ultimately linked to the maintenance of social class divisions and indeed a host of other social and economic divisions, including the 'digital divide'. Gouvias

explores these issues through an analysis of how the European Union views lifelong learning and the Learning Society, focusing in particular on a number of EU sponsored projects aiming at nurturing these. His conclusion is that the official EU governmental apparatus' outlook on lifelong learning and the Learning Society is set within a discourse where human capital production, neoliberal principles and individualism predominate and squeeze out conceptions of 'social solidarity and collective action': key ingredients for an education for progressive social change.

Changing tack, **Phil Badger** and **Glenn Rikowski** indicate how a critical moral education might play a significant role in education for social change. Moral education is usually viewed through a very conservative lens in government and education Establishment circles. Badger and Rikowski make a case for an approach to moral education that transcends both 'traditional' and 'market' forms of moral discourse. They argue that moral education needs to be allied to the development of critical thinking skills and a renaissance of social studies in the curriculum. Furthermore, Badger and Rikowski propose that what we need is an education system and experience that attempts to generate a 'critical mass rather than an enlightened few'.

In her article, **Susan Devine** illustrates how difficult it is as a parent and for teachers to provide moral guidance in a society that is changing so rapidly. In these circumstances, she argues, we should be equipped with the conceptual skills and resources to carve out 'own moral sense'. Ultimately, we must become our own moral educator.

Ethics is also at the centre of **Ruth Rikowski's** article. From a philosophical analysis of the nature of ethics, Rikowski examines how ethical issues are at the heart of a range of issues in the teaching of Information Technology (IT). She explores types of ethical issues encountered in teaching IT, how to teach ethical issues in IT and when to teach these issues. Rikowski concludes by arguing that although many of these problems can be addressed with some success in contemporary society and its education systems, some, such as the digital divide will require more drastic action: i.e. the struggle for radical social change which moves beyond capitalist society.

Continuing on the theme of IT, **Paul Catherall** argues for the need to bring critical perspectives to bear on the headlong rush by further and higher educational institutions to adopt a plethora of web-based learning resources and virtual learning environments (VLEs). He notes the resistance by some academic staff to these developments,

as they fear that a top-down, technology-driven IT policy may have some negative effects for learning and the cultivation of a community of learners and scholars. As Catherall notes:

> As a consequence of the rise of e-learning and VLEs, many educationalists have begun to seriously question what has become a moot feature of educational practice.

In this context, Catherall explores five critical perspectives on e-learning and VLEs: the digital divide; the standards debate; academic objections to e-learning; the commercialisation of academia that e-learning appears to engender; and organisation and deployment challenges posed by e-learning. He touches briefly on the counter-arguments to these critical positions on e-learning, but concludes that 'objections to fundamental e-learning concepts and the systematisation of education ... cannot easily be dismissed'. However, despite these objections, Catherall indicates that e-learning will not be just a mere fad but will 'remain a major feature of the modern educational context'. Whilst there are clearly some negative consequences of e-learning, it is also the case that it has the potential to be allied to projects of radical change within education and beyond. This is the political challenge and opportunity afforded by e-learning, which we ignore at our peril.

Helen Raduntz's article begins by providing an analysis of the marketisation of education via a Marxian perspective. Then, through uncovering the 'inner dynamics of the capitalist economy' she indicates how education functions as a crisis management tool for the contradictions and crises thrown up by these dynamics. Raduntz uses these opening sections of her article to pursue the direction of educational change in contemporary society. In the process, but coming from a different angle, she reaches a similar conclusion to Zapopan Martin Muela-Meza: that education is becoming integrated into the capitalist economy.

The final article, by **Victor Rikowski** indicates how education is being redefined and restructured to the detriment of original and critical thought. Really existing education is becoming *anti-educational*. Its impulse is to seek and to nurture in the student conformity, compliance, mediocrity and job-readiness. Teachers, examiners and students themselves need to struggle against these trends. From a student perspective, Victor indicates the poverty of student life and educational experience today, despite all the apparent advances (e.g. IT usage in the classroom). He challenges all of us to rethink educational aims and policy for human and individual progress.

The issue also contains some extensive and intensive e-dialogues (**Rich Gibson** and **Glenn Rikowski**, and **Alpesh Maisuria** and **Spyros Themelis**) and e-interviews (**Peter McLaren** and **Mike Cole** are interviewed by **Glenn Rikowski** in separate e-interviews). These e-dialogues and e-interviews provide further insights and significant topics for debate regarding Education for Social Change.

There are also a number of reviews, and two poems by **Gregory Rikowski**. Finally, there is a short Epilogue by **Glenn Rikowski**.

Conclusion

Whilst the articles, e-dialogues and e-interviews in this Special Issue on education for social change do not agree on a single analysis of the issues let alone the solutions, they do indicate a range of questions that require consideration in the project of education for progressive social change. Furthermore, in their various ways, they indicate that education (founded on the necessary library and information resources) must play a vital role in struggles for human and individual development and progress today.

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Glenn Rikowski, London, 29th September 2006.

Class, Capital and Education in this Neoliberal and Neoconservative Period

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INTRODUCTION

The current neoliberal project, the latest stage of the capitalist project, is to reshape the public's understanding of the purposes of public institutions and apparatuses, such as schools, universities, libraries. In schools, intensive testing of pre-designed curricula (high stakes testing) and accountability schemes (such as the 'failing schools' and regular inspection regime that somehow only penalizes working class schools) are aimed at restoring schools (and further education and universities) to what dominant elites – the capitalist class – perceive to be their "traditional role" of producing passive worker/citizens with just enough skills to render themselves useful to the demands of capital.

In the US and the UK and throughout other parts of the globe (Hill, 2005b; and Hill *et al*, 2006), policy developments such as the 1988 Education Reform Act, passed by the Conservatives and extended/deepened by New Labour, and in the USA, the Bush 'No Child Left Behind Act' of 2001 have nationalized and intensified patterns of control, conformity and (increasing) hierarchy. These, and other policies such as the Patriot Act in the USA that permits secret services to spy on/access the library borrowing habits of readers, have deepened the logic and extent of neoliberal capital's hold over education reforms, over public services. They are an attempt to both intimidate and to conform critical and alternative thinking.

In the US, such reforms include: the heavy involvement of educational management organizations (EMOs) as well as the introduction of voucher plans, charter schools, and other manifestations of the drive toward the effective privatization of public education. England and Wales, meanwhile, have endured the effective elimination of much comprehensive (all-intake, all-ability), public secondary schooling. Commercialization and marketization have led to school-based budgetary control, a 'market' in new types of state schooling, and the effective 'selling off' of state schools to rich and/or religious individuals or groups via the Academies

 scheme. The influence of neoliberal ideology also led to the October 2005 proposals for state schools, which have historically fallen under the purview of democratically elected local school districts, to become independent 'mini-businesses' called 'independent trust schools' (Hill, 2006). Similar attempts at change have occurred throughout developed and developing countries (Hill, 2005a; and Hill *et al*, 2006).

However, the impact of the 'New Labour' government in Britain on society and our schools and universities, and the impacts of the Bush Administration in the US make it impossible to understand the current crises in schools and in democracy solely in terms of neoliberalism. We need also to consider the impact of neoconservatism.

In this article, I want to provide an overview of how those agendas in education play themselves out in the UK, the USA and worldwide.

SOCIAL CLASS AND CAPITAL

There have been a number of changes in capitalism in this current period of neoliberal globalization. One development is the growth in service, communications and technological industries in the developed world. One 'service industry' is education. As the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) observes, 'services are coming to dominate the economic activities of countries at virtually every stage of development' (ICC, 1999, p. 1).

Another development is the declining profitability of Capital – the crisis of capital accumulation. This crisis has resulted in intensification of competition between Capitals, between national and between transnational Capitals and corporations. There is general agreement among critical educators and Marxists that 'the pressure on nations to liberalize services at the national level can be seen, therefore, as a response to the declining profitability of manufacture' (Beckmann and Cooper, 2004). This crisis of capital accumulation, as predicted by Marx and Engels (1848) has led to the intensification of the extraction of surplus value, the progressing global immiseration of workers, and the intensification of control of populations by the ideological and repressive state apparatuses identified and analyzed by Althusser **(1)**.

Class War From Above

Neoliberal and neoconservative policies aimed at intensifying the rate of capital accumulation and extraction of surplus value comprise an intensification of 'class war from above' by the capitalist class against the working class. One major aspect of this is the fiscal policy of increasing taxes on workers and decreasing taxes on business and the rich. Of course, some people don't like trillion dollar tax handouts to the rich. These oppositionists have to be denigrated, scorned, and controlled! This is where neoconservative policies are important. On the one hand they persuade the poor to vote (right-wing Republican) for a social or religious or anti abortion or homophobic or racist agenda against their own (more Left-wing, more Democrat, or further Left) economic self-interest.

The class war from above has a neoliberal, economic element. It has also embraced a neoconservative political element to strengthen the force of the state behind it. In Andrew Gamble's words, it is *The Free Economy and the Strong State* (1999), a state strong on controlling education, strong on controlling teachers, strong on marginalizing oppositional democratic forces such as local elected democracy, trade unions, critical educators, critical students. Moreover, neoconservatism aids in the formation of a state strong on enforcing the neoliberalization of schools and society.

Despite the horizontal and vertical cleavages within the capitalist class (Dumenil and Levy, 2004), the architects of neoliberal and neoconservative policies know very well who they are. Nobody is denying capitalist class consciousness. They are rich. They are powerful. And they are transnational as well as national. They exercise (contested) control over the lives of worker-laborers and worker-subjects. If there is one class that does not lack class-consciousness, *the subjective appreciation of its common interest, and its relationship within the means of production to other social classes*, it is the capitalist class.

Members of the capitalist class do recognize that they survive in dominance *as a class* whatever their skin colour, or dreams, or multifaceted subjectivities and histories of hurt and triumph; they survive precisely because they do know they are a class. They have class consciousness, they are 'a class *for* themselves' (a class with a consciousness that they are a class), as well as a 'class *in* themselves' (a class or group of people with shared economic conditions of existence and interests). The capitalist class does not tear itself to pieces negating or suborning its class identity, its class

awareness, it's class power over issues of 'race' and gender (or, indeed, sexuality or disability). And they govern in their own interests, not just in education 'reform', but also in enriching and empowering themselves – while disempowering and impoverishing others – the (white and black and other minority, male and female) working class.

Increasingly Unequal Distribution of Wealth in the US and Britain

David Harvey (2005) argues that while the intellectual origins of neoliberalism reach back to the 1930s, its material origins stem from the crisis of capital accumulation of the late 1960s and 1970s. In his estimation, this crisis constituted both a political threat and an economic threat to economic elites and ruling classes across the advanced capitalist and the developing countries (2005, p. 15). In the US, prior to the 1970s, the wealthiest 1% of the population owned between 30% and 47% of all wealth assets (p.16). But in the 1970s it slid to just 20%. Asset values collapsed. In Harvey's phrase, "the upper classes had to move decisively if they were to protect themselves from political and economic annihilation" (p. 16). And they did, leading Harvey to conclude that we can best understand neoliberalization as a project designed to achieve the restoration of class power. Furthermore, given that by 1998 the percentage ownership of all wealth assets in the US held by the wealthiest 1% of the population had almost doubled since the mid-1970s, we should view the neoliberal project as having achieved great success.

Likewise in the UK, the wealth of the super-rich has doubled since Tony Blair came to power in 1997. According to the Office for National Statistics (2000), nearly 600,000 individuals in the top 1% of the UK wealth league owned assets worth £355bn in 1996, the last full year of Conservative rule. By 2002, that had increased to £797bn.

Increasingly Unequal Distribution of Income in the US and Britain

As for income, the ratio of the salaries of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) to the median compensation of workers increased from just over 30 to 1 in 1970 to nearly 500 to 1 by 2000 (Harvey, 2005:17).

Korten (2004) highlights the immense increase in salaries taken by top US executives since the early 1990s. In the US, between 1990 and 1999 inflation increased by 27.5%, workers' pay by 32.3%, corporate profits by 116%, and, finally, the pay of chief executive officers by a staggering, kleptocratic 535% (Korten, 2004, p. 17; see also Brenner, 2005).

In the US, the share of the national income taken by the top 1% of income earners had been 16% in the 1930s. It fell to around 8% between the mid-1940s and mid-1970s. The neoliberal revolution restored its share of national income to 15% by the end of the twentieth century. And the Federal minimum wage, which stood on a par with the poverty level in 1980, had fallen to 30% below that in 1990: "The long decline in wage levels had begun" (Harvey, 2005, p.25). Pollin (2003) shows that, in the US the level of 'real wages' per hour dropped from $15.72 in 1973 to $14.15 in 2000. In the UK, the top 1% of income earners have doubled their share of the national income from 6.5% to 13% since 1982 (Harvey, 2005, pp.15-18).Tax policy has been crucial in affecting these growing inequalities.

Changing Tax Rates: Capitalist Winners and Working Class Losers

Dumenil and Levy (2004) show that in the US, those in the highest tax bracket are paying tax at a rate around half that of the 1920s, whereas the current tax rate for those in the lowest tax bracket has more than doubled over the same period. As a forerunner of George W. Bush's 'trillion dollar tax giveaway to the rich', Ronald Reagan cut the top rate of personal tax from 70% to 28%. Both the Reagan and Thatcher governments also dramatically cut taxes on business/corporations.

In Britain, too, the working class is paying more tax. The richest groups are paying a smaller proportion of their income in taxes in comparison to 1949 and to the late 1970s. These dates were both in the closing stages at the end of two periods of what might be termed 'Old Labour', or social democratic governments (in ideological contradistinction to the primarily neoliberal policies of New Labour').

As Paul Johnson and Frances Lynch reported in their 2004 article in *The Guardian*, in comparison with the late 1970s, the 'fat cats' are now paying around half as much tax (income tax and insurance contribution rate). These 'fat cats' are paying less income tax and

national insurance as a percentage of their earned income than in 1949. "As a percentage of income, middle and high earners pay less tax now than at any time in the past thirty years" (Johnson and Lynch, 2004).

In contrast, the average tax-take for 'the low paid' (allowing for inflation) is roughly double that of the early 1970s – and nearly twice as much as in 1949 (Johnson and Lynch, 2004). No wonder, then, that Johnson and Lynch titled their article: "Sponging off the Poor."

CAPITAL, CORPORATIONS AND EDUCATION

Education is now big business – "edu-business." Current worldwide spending in education is "estimated at around 2,000 billion dollars ... more than global automotive sales" (Santos, 2004, p. 17). According to Santos, "capital growth in education has been exponential, showing one of the highest earning rates of the market: £1000 invested in 1996 generated £3,405 four years later" (Santos, 2004, pp.17-18, cited in Delgado-Ramos and Saxe-Fernandez, 2005). Santos continues, 'that is an increased value of 240%, while the London Stock Change valorization rate accounted on the same period for 65%. Other 2004 data indicate that, current commercialized education, incomplete as it is, already generates around $365 billion in profits worldwide" (idem).

Capital – national and transnational corporations along with their major shareholders – has a number of plans with respect to education. Firstly, there is "The Capitalist Plan *For* Education." This plan aims to produce and reproduce a work force and citizenry and set of consumers fit for Capital. According to this plan, schools must serve two overriding functions, an ideological function and a labour training function. These comprise socially producing labour-power for capitalist enterprises. This is people's capacity to labour – their skills and attitudes, together with their ideological compliance and suitability for Capital – as workers, citizens and consumers. In this analysis, Althusser's concepts of schools as ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) is useful here, with schools as key elements in the ideological indoctrination of new citizens and workers into thinking 'there is no alternative' to capitalism, that capitalism, and competitive individualism with gross inequalities is 'only natural' (Althusser, 1979. See also Hill, 2001, 2003 and 2004b).

Secondly, there is "The Capitalist Plan *In* Education", which entails smoothing the way for direct profit-taking/ profiteering from education). This plan is about how Capital wants to make *Direct Profits* from education. This centres on setting business 'free' in education for profit-making and profit-taking – extracting profits from privately controlled/owned schools and colleges or aspects of their functioning. Common mechanisms for such profiteering include: managing, advising, controlling and owning schools. These possibilities are widened in the UK by New Labour's Education White Paper of October 2005.

Finally, there is "Capital's Global Plan for Education Corporations." This is a series of national capitalist plans for domestically based national or multinational corporations globally. This is a plan for British, US, Australian, New Zealand and, locally (e.g. in particular states such as Brazil in Latin America) based "edu-businesses" and corporations to profit from international privatizing, franchising and marketing activities. With a worldwide education industry valued at $2 trillion annually, "it is not surprising that many investors and "edupreneurs" are anxious to seize the opportunities to access this untapped gold mine" (Schugarensky and Davidson-Harden, 2003, p.323). It is not just national edu-businesses that are involved – it is large multi-activity national and global capitalist companies.

The restructuring of education has taken place/is taking place throughout the globe. Neoliberalisation, accompanied by neoconservative policies (Dumenil and Levy, 2004; Harvey, 2005), has proceeded apace, spurred by governments committed to developing human capital and labour power more suited to the interests of Capital and the owners of capital, the capitalist class. This restructuring is also developing and promoting their own Edubusinesses, in order to gain these service exports, the export of educational services (Hatcher, 2001; Rikowski, 2002).

Internationally, liberalisation of schooling and higher education, and other education sectors, has been taken up voluntarily, or been forced upon governments through the influence of the world regime of neo-liberal capitalist organisations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, OECD, international trade regimes such as the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), and regional derivatives/ government/national capital/US capital hemispheric organisations such as the Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas (PREAL) in Latin America. Where world or regional organisations of capital are not successful in implementing liberalisation, then local Free Trade Agreements

(FTAs) and bilateral intergovernmental agreements are opening up 'free trade' in services such as 'education services'. **(2)**

NEOLIBERAL POLICIES

There are a number of common aspects of the neo-liberalisation of schooling and education services. It is possible to identify twelve aspects of neoliberal policy within states, and a further four in terms of global policy. Within states, these are as follows.

The first policy is low public expenditure. Typically there has been a regime of cuts in the post-war Welfare State, the withdrawal of state subsidies and support, and the transition towards lower public expenditure. This has involved public expenditure cuts in education. These have been driven primarily and most significantly by an economic imperative to reduce aggregate social expenditures. In developed states this has been termed `prudence' or 'sound fiscal policy'. In developing and less developed states, this policy has been a condition of structural adjustment programs and loans (SAPs and SALs) administered by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Chossudovsky, 1998) designed primarily with debt servicing obligations in mind.

Within national economies there have been the policies of controlling inflation by interest rates, preferably by an independent central bank, responsive to the needs of capital, rather than responsive to domestic political demands, and the policy of balancing budgets, and not using budgets to stimulate demand.

A salient policy development is privatization of formerly publicly owned and managed services. Variously termed `liberalisation' (for example by the International Labour Organisation) or neo-liberalisation, this comprises transferring into private ownership, selling off, the means of production, distribution and exchange, and also, in the last two decades globally, of `selling off' services such as education and health.

Policies which have served to `soften up' public opinion and service provision for privatisation include the setting up of markets (or quasi-markets) in services and competition between different `providers' such as universities and schools, competing with each other for (high potential) students/pupils.

A concomitant of marketisation is decentralisation: In general neoliberal education policies, for example in Latin America (Carnoy, 2002) and elsewhere (such as in England and Wales) have taken the shape of 'decentralization' efforts, aimed at scaling down the role of central governments in direct responsibility for different aspects of education, toward increased provincial/regional, municipal and private involvement in education).

These policies, of privatisation, fiscal `rectitude', decentralisation and deregulation commonly result in increasingly differentiated provision of services. Within states this results in intensified hierarchical differentiation between education institutions on the basis of (`raced' and gendered) social class.

Within states, neo-liberal education policies stress selective education. Within education, whether through the development of private schools and universities, or whether through the creation of different (and hierarchically arranged) different types of schools and universities (as in Britain) the public right to education has been transformed into the creation of `opportunity' to acquire the means of education and additional cultural capital, through selection, through a selective and hierarchically stratified schooling and education system.

There is increasing differentiation, too, globally. Neoliberalisation of schooling services, in particular higher education, has reinforced the relegation of most developing states and their populations to subordinate global labour market positions, specializing in lower skilled services and production. This global differentiation is enforced by the World Bank and other international agency prescriptions regarding what education, and at what levels, should be provided in less developed and developing states (Leher, 2004).

Schools and universities, are increasingly run in accordance with the principles of 'new public managerialism' (Mahoney and Hextall, 2000) based on a corporate managerialist model imported from the world of business. As well as the needs of Capital dictating the principal aims of education, the world of business also supplies the model of how it is to be provided and managed.

A key element of Capital's plans for education is to cut its labour costs. For this, a deregulated labour market is essential - with schools and universities able to set their own pay scales and sets of conditions - busting national trade union agreements, and, weakening union powers to protect their workforces. Thus, where neo-liberalism reigns, there is relatively untrammeled selling and

buying of labour power, for a 'flexible', poorly regulated labour market (Costello and Levidow, 2001). Some impacts on workers' rights, pay and what the International Labour Organisation calls `securities' are spelt out below.

Internationally, neo-liberalism requires untrammelled free trade. Currently the major mechanism for this is the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), though there are and have been many other mechanisms. **(3)**

One aspect is that barriers to international trade, capitalist enterprise and the extraction of profits should be removed. This applies as much to trade in services such as education and health as it does to the extraction of oil or the control of water supply.

There should also be a 'level playing field' for companies of any nationality within all sectors of national economies. Barriers such as 'most favoured nation' (MFN) clauses should be dismantled, allowing any corporation, whether domestic or foreign or transnational, to own/run/universities, teacher education, schooling in any state.

Neoliberal Capital also demands that international trade rules and regulations are necessary to underpin 'free' trade, with a system for penalising 'unfair' trade policies such as subsidies, and such as promoting/favouring national interests or of national workforces like teachers and lecturers. Certainly, according to the GATS, this 'level playing field' will be legally enforceable – under pain of financial penalties, for any state that has signed up particular education services to the GATS.

There is an exception to these free trade demands by transnational Capital. The above restrictions do not apply in all cases to the USA (or other major centres of capitalist power such as the EU). Ultimately, the USA may feel free to impose the above 'economic democracy' and `choice' by diplomatic, economic or military means. Ultimately peoples and states can be coerced to choose, bombed to obey.

Thus, key strategies to maximise capital accumulation, and to increase the rates of profit, are global free trade and privatization within states. Hirrt (2004) summarises the `New Economic Context' (of neo-liberalism) as having four characteristics:

- The intensification ('globalization') of economic competition
- A decrease in state financial resources for public sector provision such as school or university education
- A faster pace of change (with rapid developments in technology and in opening up new markets)
- And a 'polarization' of the labour market – with less being spent on the education of `the masses' in particular.

Two of Hirrt's characteristics are contextual (increasing competition, and faster technology/opening up new markets). In the other two (public expenditure cuts, and increasing polarization/hierarchicalisation of education and the workforce) Hirrt identifies what he considers the salient intentions and effects of neoliberal policies.

He also draws attention to a seeming contradiction between two of these four intentions, where:

> ... the industrial and financial powers ask the political leaders to transform education so that it can better support the competitiveness of regional, national or European companies. But, on the other hand, the same economic powers require that the State reduce its fiscal pressure and thus reduce its expenditure, notably in the field of education (Hirrt, 2004, pp.444-445).

The contradiction is solved by polarisation. The poor (in general) are polarized to the bottom of an intellectually and materially worsening education. Why educate them expensively?

NEOCONSERVATIVE POLICIES

There are, of course resistant teachers, teacher educators, students and student teachers who seek better and more hopeful pasts, presents and futures, rooted in experiences and histories pre-dating and seeking to post-date the combined neoliberal and neoconservative storming of the ramparts of the state and the education state apparatuses - ministries, schools, vocational colleges, and universities.

Much of this paper is about how Capital, and the governments and state apparatuses serving their interests, `get away with it', fight

the `culture wars' and seek to attain ideological hegemony for neo-liberalism - displacing oppositional counter-hegemonic liberal-progressive, Marxist/socialist, and social democratic ideals and `common sense'. This partly takes place through a process of a systematic denigration and humbling of publicly provided services and public sector workers as bureaucratised, slow to adapt, resistant to change, expensive, and putting their own interests above that of the service and of the `consumers' of those services. It also takes place through conservative control of the curriculum and pedagogy that seeks to silence or discredit or marginalize counter-hegemonic ideologies.

A policy that is both neoliberal and neoconservative - partly aimed at whipping these resistant and critical students, teachers, professors in line, is employment policy. Enforcing acceptance of the neoliberal revolution and weakening opposition to it is partly carried out through the importation of `new public managerialism' into the management of schools and colleges and education services.

Here surveillance of teachers and students, partly through the imposition of tightly monitored testing of chunks of knowledge deemed by national and state/local governments to be suitable, and sanitized, and conservative enough. Conservatism is enforced through the curriculum and the SATS (Standard Assessment Tests). Indeed, in England and Wales, Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher personally intervened on a number of occasions during the drawing up of the various subject outlines for the national curriculum of 1988 - a curriculum largely maintained by New Labour today (Hill, 2006).

There are three major aspects of neoconservatism. The first is that described above - the circumscription, the attempt to straightjacket students', teachers' and professors' practices- their curricula, their pedagogy, their use of their time in class and for homework. This is the repressive use of the local state apparatus.

The second is the degree of enforcement by the central state apparatuses. These include those of the security state. This includes blacklists, non-promotion of oppositional teachers and professors, public vilification such as the right–wing campaign against `The Dirty Thirty' left-wing professors at UCLA (Weiner, 2006). There is not yet a resuscitation of the McCarthyite House of UnAmerican Activities Committee, but the widespread ant-terror legislation such as the so-called PATRIOT Act in the USA, including the right of the

security services to track the library borrowing habits of US residents, does serve to diminish oppositional activity.

The third aspect of neoconservatism is the ongoing `culture wars', the use of the ideological state apparatuses (some churches, many schools, nearly all mass media) to legitimate neoliberal and neoconservative ideology, `common-sense', practices and beliefs. Although there is the appearance of ideological choice between, for example, the major political parties in the USA and Britain, or between mass circulation television and newspapers, seriously oppositional views are erased from television programmes and party platforms. There is plenty of choice about types of coffee or muffin, not much about type of society and economic system. People who question the `tweedledum and tweedledee' choice in politics and the media tend to be regarded in much of the USA and Britain (though not all) as suspect - and can be transferred from the ministrations of the ideological state apparatuses to the attentions of the repressive state apparatuses.

A current example in Britain is the debate about the New Labour governments October 2006 White Paper on Education (Her Majesty's Government, 2005). This is a major step on the neoliberalisation of state schooling in England and Wales in terms of marketisation and pre-privatisation (Rikowski, 2005a, b). **(4)** (which seeks to further open up schools to private and business ownership, control and sponsorship, including setting up a system of new `Independent Trust Schools', state primary and secondary schools that can become self-governing in terms of finances, admissions, curriculum and staffing). This has occasioned vigorous debate – and fairly unprecedented opposition from within the Labour Party itself (e.g. through the pressure group, Compass) **(5)**. However, the debate is largely defensive, seeking, largely, to defend the continued role of local education authorities and opposing further marketisation and neoliberalisation of schools. It is scarcely proactive. It does not seek the reversal of the New Labour policies since 1997 on marketisation, nor the changing of the national curriculum (Hill, 2006).

Similarly with teacher education: in virtually all current discussion about the curriculum for `teacher training' in England and Wales, there is an acceptance of the status quo, substantially introduced as part of the Thatcher-Major revolution in education. Deep critique of the 'teacher training' curriculum is rare.

NEOLIBERALISM AND NEOCONSERVATISM: GLOBAL SIMILARITIES, NATIONAL VARIATIONS

While there are global similarities in liberalizing education policy, there are national and also local variations in the type and extent of the various policies. These relate to different historical conditions and balance of forces - the relative strengths of the trade union movement, workers' trade union and political organizations on the one hand, and other forces in Civil Society- with their varying strengths of resistance to neoliberal policies, and of local Capital on the other. We are not in an era of the unimpeded march to neo-liberal capitalism. Comparing three North American states, for example (Canada, the USA and Mexico) shows some similarities and some differences in context and policy.**(6)**

Nor are we in an era of the unimpeded march of neoconservatism. Western Europe in general fails to comprehend the specific religious right and radical right agenda in the USA. Such appeals go relatively unheeded, and met with incomprehension not just in social democratic Scandinavia but in the rest of Western Europe, too. In Western Europe, outside of wartime, economic issues tend to prevail in elections. A partial exception is currently in Britain, where all three parties, New Labour, Liberal Democrat and Conservative, are supporting similar versions of `compassionate' neoliberalism and where New Labour and Conservative appear identical in their neoconservatism. However, historically in Britain, and currently in the rest of Western Europe, parties are more social class based and have economic agendas displaying far more divergence than in the USA and Britain.

THE IMPACTS SO FAR

Capital has not merely developed these plans and set them on the shelf for future reference. Many elements of these plans have already been put into action. We can already see much of the impact of these initiatives in the growing inequities they produce in the lives of students, declining levels of democratic control over schools, and worsening work conditions in the teaching and other education professions.

Impacts on Equity: Neoliberalism and Widening ('Raced' and Gendered) Class Inequalities in Education

Where there is a market in schools (where high status schools can select their intakes, whether on 'academic achievement' or other class-related criteria such as 'aptitudes'), then the result is increasing 'raced' and gendered social class differentiation. The middle classes (predominantly white) rapidly colonize the 'best' schools; the working classes (white and black) get pushed out. They don't get through the school gate. High status/high achieving middle class schools get better and better results. In a competitive market in schools, 'Sink' schools sink further, denuded of their 'brightest' intakes.

The same is true of higher education. In the US it is highly tiered – there is a hierarchy. Entry to elite schools/universities is very largely dependent on a student's ability to pay – on social class background. This is intensifying in England and Wales, too. Until the 1980s, there were no university fees in Britain – the state/ the taxpayer paid. Entry was free for students. For the last twenty year, all universities charged the same for undergrad courses. Now, the New Labour government is introducing 'variable' fees for different universities. Britain is 'going American'. This will reinforce elitism and exclude poorer groups, especially minorities, but white working class students, too.

Neoliberalization of schooling and university education is accompanied by an increase in (gendered, 'raced', linguistically differentiated) social class inequalities in educational provision, attainment and subsequent position in the labour market. For example, the movement to voucher and charter schools as well as other forms of privatized education such as chains of schools in US **(7)** have proven to be disproportionately beneficial to those segments of society who can afford to pay for better educational opportunities and experiences, leading to further social exclusion and polarization.**(8)**

Hirtt (2004) has noted the apparently contradictory education policies of Capital, 'to adapt education to the needs of business and at the same time reduce state expenditure on education" (p.446). He suggests that this contradiction is resolved by the polarization of the labour market, that from an economic point of view it is not necessary to provide high level education and of general knowledge, to all future workers. "It is now possible and even highly recommendable to have a more polarized education system … education should not try to transmit a broad common culture to the

majority of future workers, but instead it should teach them some basic, general skills" (Hirtt, 2004, p.446).

In brief, then, manual and service workers receive a cheaper and inferior education limited to transferable skills while elite workers receive more expensive and more and internationally superior education. Not only does this signal one manifestation of the hierarchicalization of schools and the end of the comprehensive ideal it also represents a form of educational triage – with basic skills training for millions of workers, more advanced education for supervision for middle class and in some countries the brightest of the working classes, and elite education for scions of the capitalist, and other sections of the ruling classes.

Impacts on Workers' Pay, Conditions and Securities

A key element of Capital's plans for education is to cut its labour costs. For this, a deregulated labour market becomes essential – with schools and colleges able to set their own pay scales and sets of conditions – busting national trade union agreements, and, weakening the power of trade unions – such as teacher unions – to protect their workforces. As a consequence of Capital's efforts to extract higher rates of surplus value from their labour power, educational workers suffer declining pay, decreasing benefits, and deteriorating working conditions (Hill, 2005 b). There is the ongoing *casualisation* of academic labour, and the increased *proletarianisation* of the teaching profession.

By "casualization", I mean the move towards part-time and temporary employment in the education sector. Simultaneously, the "proletarianisation" of teaching results in:
- Declining wages, benefits, and professional autonomy for teachers,
- Growing intensification of teachers' labour through increases in class-sizes and levels of surveillance, and
- Mounting efforts to eliminate the influence of teachers' unions as mechanisms for promoting and defending teachers' interests.

The intensification of work is justified in different countries through campaigns of vilification against public service workers such as teachers and education officials. Siqueira (2005) reports that in Brazil, the Cardoso government of the mid-1990s launched, using the media, a renewed and stronger campaign against civil servants, unions and retired public employees.

Some of the usual terms used by his government to refer to these groups were: sluggish, negligent, agitators, old-fashioned, unpatriotic, selfish and lazy. This is part of the global neoliberal critique of public service workers for being expensive self-interested workers who have 'captured' the professions with their restrictive and expensive practices, In Britain, Stephen Ball (1990, p. 22) has called this denigration, 'a discourse of derision'. In some right-wing newspapers, such as *The Daily Mail in* Britain, it is more like a 'discourse of hate'. One need only recall former Secretary of Education Rod Paige's denigration of the National Education Association as a "terrorist organization" to find a potent example of such speech in the US.

Impacts on Democracy and on Critical Thinking

The neoconservative faces of education 'reform', indeed, of the wider marketization and commodification of humanity and society, come to play in the enforcement and policing of consent, the de-legitimizing of deep dissent, and the weakening of oppositional centres and practices and thought. In eras of declining capital accumulation, an ultimately inevitable process, Capital – and the governments and parties and generals and CEOs who act at their behest – more and more nakedly ratchet up the ideological and repressive state apparatuses of control (Hill, 2001, 2003 and 2004b). Thus key working class organizations such as trade unions and democratically elected municipal governments are marginalized and their organizations, and those of other radically oppositional organizations based on race, ethnicity, religion, are attacked – through laws, rhetoric, and ultimately, sometimes, by incarceration.

In education, the combined neoliberal-neoconservative educational 'reform' has led to a radical change in what governments and most school and college managements/ leaderships themselves see as their mission. In the 1960s and 1970s (and with long prior histories), liberal–humanist or social democratic or socialist ends of education were common through the advanced capitalist (and parts of the anti-colonialist developing) worlds.

This has changed dramatically within the lifetimes of those over thirty. Now the curriculum is conservative and it is controlled. Now the hidden curriculum of pedagogy is performative processing and 'delivery' or pre-digested points. Now the overwhelming and nakedly over-riding and exclusive focus is on the production of a differentially educated, tiered ('raced and gendered') social class workforce and compliant citizenry. Differentially skilled and

socially/politically/culturally neutered and compliant human capital is now the production focus of neoliberalised education systems and institutions, hand in glove with and enforced by a neoconservative ideology and state.

RESISTANCE

But there is resistance; there are spaces, disarticulations, and contradictions. There are people who want to realize a different vision of education. There are people who want a more human and more equal society, a society where students and citizens and workers are not sacrificed on the altar of profit before all else.

And there are always, sometimes minor, sometimes major, awakenings – that the material conditions of existence, for teacher educators, teacher, students, and workers and families more widely – simply do not match or recognize the validity of neoliberal or neoconservative or other capitalist discourse and policy.

Cultural Workers as Critical Egalitarian Transformative Intellectuals and the Politics of Cultural/Educational Transformation

What influence can critical librarians, information workers, cultural workers, teachers, pedagogues, have in working towards a democratic, egalitarian society/economy/polity? **(9)**

How much autonomy from state suppression and control do/can state apparatuses and their workers - such as librarians, teachers, lecturers, youth workers, have in capitalist states such as England and Wales, or the USA? Don't they get slapped down, brought into line, controlled or sat upon when they start getting dangerous, when they start getting a constituency/having an impact? When their activities are deemed by the capitalist class and the client states and governments of/for Capital to be injurious to the interests of (national or international) Capital?

The repressive cards within the ideological state apparatuses are stacked against the possibilities of transformative change through the state apparatuses and their agents. But historically and internationally, this often has been the case. Spaces do exist for counter-hegemonic struggle – sometimes (as in the 1980s and

1990s) narrower, sometimes (as in the 1960s and 1970s and currently) broader. By itself, divorced from other arenas of progressive struggle, its success, the success of radical librarians, cultural workers, media workers, education workers, will be limited. This necessitates the development of pro-active debate both by, and within, the Radical Left. But it necessitates more than that. It calls for direct engagement with liberal, social democratic and Radical Right ideologies and programmes, including New Labour's, in all the areas of the state and of civil society, in and through all the ideological and repressive State Apparatuses, and in and through organizations and movements seeking a democratic egalitarian economy, polity and society.

It takes courage, what Gramsci called, 'civic courage'. It is often difficult. Some of our colleagues/comrades/companeras/companeras/political and organizational co-workers ain't exactly easy to get along with. Neither are most managements; especially those infected with the curse of 'new public managerialism', the authoritarian managerialist brutalist style of management and (anti-) human relations, where `bosses know best' and 'don't you dare step outa line, buddy!'

But I want here to modify the phrase 'better to die on your feet than live on your knees'. It is of course better to live on your/our feet than live on your/our knees. And whether it is millions on the streets defending democratic and workers' rights (such as over pensions, in Britain and elsewhere, or opposing state sell-offs of publicly owned services, in France and elsewhere, or laws attacking workers' rights, in Italy and Australia and elsewhere) – all in the last two years – or in defence of popular socialist policies in Venezuela, we are able, in solidarity, and with political aims and organization, not only to stand/live on our feet, but to march with them. And to have not just an individual impact, but a mass/massive impact. We have a three way choice – to explicitly support the neoliberalisation and commodification and capitalization of society; to be complicit, through our silence and inaction, in its rapacious and anti-human/anti-social development – or to explicitly oppose it. To live on our feet and use them and our brains, words and actions to work and move with others for a more human, egalitarian, socially just, economically just, democratic, socialist society: in that way we maintain our dignity and hope.

Notes

1. See: Althusser, 1971. See also Hill, 2001, 2004b, 2005b.

2. See: Rikowski, 2002a, 2003; Leher, 2004; Shugurensky and Davidson-Harden, 2004; Hill, 2005b; and Hill et al, 2006.

3. See: Sinclair and Grieshaber-Otto, 2002; Devidal 2004; and Shugurensky and Davidson-Harden, 2004.

4. Though see Hatcher (2005, 2006a and b) for a contrasting Marxist analysis that suggests that control over the reproduction of labour power is more salient than a pre-privatisation agenda. Hatcher's argued view is that the view of British capital is that the most favourable conditions for the production of 'human capital' for the economic competitiveness of British capital are best secured by the state directly providing school education. This contrasts with the views expressed on this matter by Rikowski and by Hill.

5. See the Compass website at http://www.compassonline.org.uk/about.asp

6. Hursh (2005) examines differences and similarities between the neoliberal education agenda in England and Wales and the USA. And in Hill (2005b) and Hill et al (2006) I attempt to show global similarities.

7. See: Molnar, 2001 and 2005; and Molnar *et al*, 2004

8. See: Whitty *et al,* 1998; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Hill, Greaves and Maisuria, 2006; and Hill et al, 2006.

9. For a fuller discussion of the concept of teachers as transformative intellectuals, or as revolutionary critical intellectuals, see, for example: Giroux, 1988; Hill, 1989, 2003, 2005c; McLaren, 2000, 2005, 2006; McLaren and Farahmandpur, 2005; and McLaren and Rikowski, 2001.

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To Teach or Not to Teach? The Dilemma of a Left-wing Student

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I have always wanted to teach. And I have always wanted to change the world. As a child, I was convinced that as Prime Minister I would one day make the world a fair place. I did not understand why on earth it wasn't already, and spent a great deal of my childhood asking why "they" (whoever they may be) were "allowed" to do "that", and receiving no sufficient answer. My sister insists that my first word was "injustice", and my mother refers often to Sunday lunches when I would get on my 'soap box' and have a rant about the state of the world. As I have matured, things have only got worse. I recall with interest the introduction of the national curriculum and the comments of despair from my teacher, about the restrictions it would place on her, when I was only seven. So why do I want to teach? I have no idea! Perhaps I am just deluding myself that I can make a difference. My father believes firmly that I am going through a 'phase' – an idealistic university student influenced by her 'loopy left' tutors. But if that's the case, why am I usually the only voice amongst my peers singing this tune? I am alone – as I will be in my classroom, and I want to make a difference. I want the children I teach to think for themselves, to understand the nature of rational and critical thinking and to reach their conclusions about the world in this way. I cannot simply stand back and look on whilst they are mere pawns in the capitalist machine, being allocated their roles for their futures. I want to inspire them to continue the fight – I want them to believe that there is something to fight for, that there is an alternative.[1] I am regularly frustrated by the laid back attitude of my peers, who inform me as if I am stupid that this is the way the world works and to stop being a dreamer. What hope do we have for social change if these are the attitudes of teachers in our classrooms?

This article will explore the nature of the teacher/pupil relationship in school and the oppression inherent therein. It will offer some explanations as to the causes of such problems and attempt to show how left-wing teacher's can avoid discrimination in their classrooms. It will discuss the issues such student teachers may have with the system, and attempt to inspire them to be 'educators for social change' within their own classrooms.

Chapter eight of Cedric Cullingford's book: *The best years of their lives?* (2002), examines the relationships between pupils and teachers experienced in the secondary school setting today. Although my desire is to teach lower primary age children, his findings are still relevant to my teaching, as the relationship formed between a child and their first teacher will influence their attitude towards education in the future. By looking at issues such as: (amongst others) the role of teachers, the dominance of being taught, and fairness and unfairness in school, he brings to light, and attempts to provide some of the reasons behind, the difficulties faced in school.

Cullingford claims that, for a number of reasons, "there is an underlying relationship with the role of teachers that is negative, dispiriting and disappointing" (2002, p.118). He says that pupils view teachers as imposers of outside will, suppliers of information for future testing and that their will and expectation "is something that essentially remains hidden from them in its purpose, and part of the power of authority" (*ibid*). The difficulty faced by children in differentiating between the role and personality of their teachers is also apparent (2002, pp.118-122).

I was disappointed, and yet unfortunately not surprised to discover in a letter from my nephew that at the tender age of eight his autonomy and desire for learning are being so successfully repressed:

"To Auntie Alle
At school today I finished my Numeracy work early. *We **had to** do* symmetry on shapes. After playtime in Literacy *we **had to*** write about how people were rescued from a flood and had to go to a place were it was safe to stay until the flood died down.
Later after Dinner time it was the time ***we were supposed to be*** reading I was reading the Lion King I didn't finish it all I got up to where Timone and Pumba come in. Then *we **had to*** pack away for Science. In Science, *we **had to** do* about light. We had a picture and *we **had to*** write down all the things that give light. In P.E. ***we did*** some skipping I spent the skipping time finding a skipping rope that was the right length. Next we were doing hula-hooping *we **had to*** spin a hula-hoop round our waste [sic] I was one of the best in the class
Love from Daniel" (my emphases)

In 9 sentences, this 'year three' child has repeated 6 times, "we had to"; once, "we were supposed to"; and only once, "we did". This suggests to me that he is well on the way to completing the lesson of capitalist education (in the sense of schooling) – that is, do not expect to do what you want. This is the way it is – you have to do as you are told. When not at school, he wants to learn, so it must be the school environment that is stifling him – and I want to be a teacher? Do I really? Can I really allow myself to support the

system I abhor, to propagate the myth of equality and fairness within my classroom when clearly there is none? Or can I make my classroom equal and fair? Can I really be an agent for social change? Is it possible to believe in Education for Social Change and yet be restricted by the increasingly marketised business-like way of educating our young, and the commodification of the human condition (see Rikowski, 2004)?

Cullingford offers some useful explanations of the causes of such problems in school. Starting with a top-down approach, he blames government interference and the constraints of the National Curriculum in particular – what he refers to as "the changing emphasis on their [teachers'] role as 'delivering' someone else's curriculum" (2002, p.119). He cites Butroyd (2001) as saying that teachers are torn between job demands and complex relationships with students (p.120). Because of these impositions on the role of the teacher, children feel unable to ask for help and that teachers 'can't be bothered' (p.122 and p.128).

Continuing with a macro-sociological approach and on the extreme end of the scale, Anarchist thought holds that the present system of schooling is the problem because of the "inherent authoritarian nature of the system" (Piluso, 1991, p.339). It inflicts particular ideologies onto the people by means of a national curriculum and uses the school system as a "more direct and successful means of social control" (Shotton, 1990, p.3). The very presence of the school with its hierarchical and dominant structure is a mirror of society and, according to Piluso (1991):

> The root cause of childhood oppression in all forms and indeed, all oppression can be found in the very structure of our society – one based on domination, hierarchy and oppression (p.334).

It is held that the authoritarian nature of schools represses the 'free spirit' of children and Libertarians offer 'deschooling'[2] as a critique, a process of education that confronts societal problems by "nurturing the radical spirit" (Piluso, 1991, p.339) as opposed to repressing it.

William Godwin (1793) focussed on the causes of human behaviour, attempting to prove that circumstance and experience (i.e. the impressions upon individuals) are responsible for human disposition and action, as opposed to any original determination (p.29). Godwin (often seen as the 'father' of Anarchism) stated that the universe is composed of cause and event, making the introduction of an external force or an 'unknown cause' (e.g. genetic dispositions) 'exceptionable' (p.29). Of course, Godwin did not have the 'benefit'

of the knowledge of modern science to help inform this opinion, however his ideas for education are still worth investigation.

Based upon the ideas put forward by William Godwin, education could only flourish in a Libertarian[3] environment (Shotton, 1990, p.12). If characteristics are developed as a result of impression and children are all capable of becoming rational beings, it necessarily follows that education should be free from coercion from either the state or the teacher, in order to develop free consciousness. Godwin argues therefore strongly against a national education system, which would inevitably "encourage the acceptance of existing social arrangements and institutions, subvert the development of a free consciousness, and seek to strengthen the state" (cited in Smith, 2003). Children should be persuaded to learn, not obligated by either the state or their educator.

The role of the teacher, according to this ideology, is to provide motivation and guidance, and Godwin is confident that truth and reason will motivate a child to learn: "I may recommend some species of knowledge by a display of the advantages which will necessarily attend upon its acquisition".[4] Therefore, teachers must not exercise tyranny over their pupils, but treat them as equals, the "pupil should go first and the master follow" (in Locke, 1980, p.21). To develop freely, it is necessary for children to have control over their own learning: "Suffer him in some instances to select his own course of reading. There is danger that there should be something too studied and monotonous in the selection we should make for him".[5]

This is an extremely optimistic approach, relying on the assumption that children wish to learn, and will develop naturally into rational adults (Locke, 1980, p.24). If genes do play a substantial part in determining behaviour[6], there is clearly danger in allowing children to develop 'freely'. Interestingly, Godwin himself later recognised the influences he had previously denied in his text: "I am…desirous of retracting the opinions I have given favourable to Helvetius' doctrine of the equality of intellectual beings as they are born…there are differences of the highest importance" (1798, in Locke, 1980, p.140). Godwin continued though to stand by his recommendations for education even after rethinking the views in this text, still believing that education is 'a most powerful instrument' and with the "appropriate training, the relevant experience and the necessary education…every child…is susceptible to the communication of wisdom" (Godwin, 1876, cited in Locke, 1980, p.141). The debate regarding the proportional influence of genetics and environment continues, but as Trigg says: "…it is artificial to insist that it is the gene, or the environment, rather than the combination of the

two…since it is in the very nature of evolution that the two act on each other, any theory which ignores the contribution of both is heading for trouble" (Trigg, 1982, p.viii). Until the level of significance of biology[7] can be undoubtedly proven, discussion surrounding 'appropriate' education will not cease (See also the work of Caplan, 1978; and Gale and Eysenck, 1992 - for further discussion of these issues).

Cedric Cullingford however, recognises that pupils do accept overall authority, just not being 'singled out' (2002, p.124) so the Anarchist perspective is generally seen as extreme. There has been extensive research into the issue regarding children's relationships with teachers, and pupils' apparent feelings of oppression, and there are a number of responses to the problem. Slightly less radical a response than Anarchism, although still radical left, is that of Marxist sociologists. Bowles and Gintis (1976) (in Moore et al 2001, p.67; and Bartlett et al 2001, p.4), argue that the school system is designed to deprive and advantage certain 'types' of pupil in order to maintain current social order. They claim that this is achieved through a 'hidden curriculum', enforced by both educational policy and individual teachers' discrimination, that lulls pupils into a state of 'false consciousness' in their ability (DiMarco, 2002a; this approach will be returned to in more detail shortly). Cullingford (2002) has noted that in the current climate of testing and 'improving standards', children are made to feel that they are never quite good enough (130) and so often develop learned helplessness affecting their subsequent lives (See also Pellegrini and Blatchford, 2000, Chapters 8 and 11; Santrock, 2004, chapters 5, 7 and 13).

Cullingford also discusses the monumental issue of unfairness within school. In particular, he indicates that positive discrimination and varying approaches to discipline result in confusion of children as to the expectations upon them (pp.126-7). Variation in teaching methods can be a problem as the motive of the teacher is often interpreted by pupils to be 'convenience' based (p.132).

On a more micro level, there are also explanations for the feelings of oppression experienced by so many pupils. The Interactionist approach focuses on the interaction between teacher and pupil and the meanings drawn from it, which are highly influential to a child's experience of school (DiMarco, 2002b).

Many educationalists have used variations of Becker's 'labelling theory' – that is when teachers attach particular 'labels' and thus expectations on particular students. These labels can be attributed in a variety of ways for a variety of reasons. Consciously or subconsciously, teachers 'label' pupils as good or bad, hard working

or lazy. The child of a friend of mine, born to a sixteen year old single mother, living on benefits in a council flat, told me that he is: "blamed every day for anything that goes wrong ... I used to be naughty and lazy, but I'm not any more I try really hard and my teacher's still horrible to me – I hate him". Working class students, due to the different cultural capital they bring to school, are often labelled more negatively than middle class pupils. Teachers expect middle class children to perform well in school, and so place high expectations upon them resulting in high achievement. Working class children however are often not expected to do well by their teachers, and so less expectation is placed upon them – or even the expectation of 'failure'. Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1966) undertook considerable study into the concept of the 'self fulfilling prophecy' (S-F-P). That is, if a child is expected to achieve by others, they will. If on the other hand they are expected to perform badly, they often feel incapable and so act in the spirit of the S-F-P by means of failure (cited in DiMarco, 2002a).

Labelling theory often implies the fault of the teacher, but as Willis' (1977) extensive study into the achievement of working class children suggests, pupils often make a conscious decision to reject their schooling if they feel they will not need it (See also Moore *et al*, 2001, p.68). In cases like this, as Cullingford is aware (2002, p.117), there is little teachers can do. However, discrimination exercised by teachers is an important factor. Some examples of how teachers can contribute to the under-achievement of the working class follow:

Example one exemplifies the different levels of expectation placed on pupils by their teachers:

Teacher: *Good morning class, now let's hand in the homework task please*

Working class pupil: *I haven't got it sir*

T: *Well there's a surprise, just for a change!*

Middle class pupil: *I haven't got it either, sorry*

T: *Oh really (name of **m/c**), I am disappointed – I expect that from (name of **w/c**) not you. Make sure I have it tomorrow ok.*

We see here an obvious difference in expectation – teachers *must* avoid such discrimination.

Example two (below) of how teachers can contribute to the problem exemplifies the gap in discussion time apparent between the social classes. Duffield and her colleagues found in their 1990s study (cited by Hill in Matheson and Grovesnor, 1999, p.96) that pupils in working class schools spent 3-6% of their time in discussion, in comparison to 17-25% of time in middle class schools:

Teacher: *ok, your group (to 'lower set' group), there are some problems on the board, please sit quietly and work through them. This group (to top set group), I'd like you to go and discuss amongst yourselves in what context you may need these problems after you leave school – what skills have been learnt?*

As we see, even within the same school, streaming can often have the same effect - Keddie described streaming as 'institutionalised labelling' (DiMarco, 2002a).

And again:

T: *(to **w/c**) Right, would you like to put the pencils away (name), and would you like to collect the books (name of **m/c**)*
M/c does as asked, w/c sits down
T: *I have just asked you to put those pencils away (name), why are you sitting there? Now do as you are told please. Thank you (**m/c** name) for doing it first time – one table point.*

This part is an example of what Meighan and Siraj-Blatchford (2003) call the 'hidden curriculum of language'. They refer to Bernstein's work, which recognised that the middle classes speak in an 'elaborated' language code, as opposed to the working classes 'restricted code'. The language of teachers, and also of textbooks, is presented in an elaborated code that is different from the one working class children are accustomed to, and that they must learn in order to survive school. Working class children are generally more used to direct commands, and may not understand fully that they are being told to do something, as opposed to being asked whether they would like to - as Hill comments (in Matheson and Grovesnor, 1999, p.94):

"This type of cultural capital is *'knowing how'*, how to speak to teachers, not only knowing *about* books, but knowing *how* to talk about them. It is knowing *how* to talk with the teacher, with what body language, accent, colloquialisms, register of voice, grammatical exactitude in terms of the 'elaborated code' of language and its associated *habitus*, or way of behaving."

During my own time spent in a reception class setting last year, I experienced first hand what Bernstein and Hill refer to. One particular child (the only black child in the whole class) would respond with blank stares to my greetings of "Good morning Lorenzo, how are you today?" However, when I reflected on this research, I changed my greeting to "Alright Lorenzo? How you doing?" and he would always answer. I changed my mode of language at random times, yet his responses remained consistent. This is clearly something that teachers ought to be aware of.

So undoubtedly, teacher training is in need of improvement, drawing attention to issues of equality. Nevertheless, teachers can't be responsible for everything; they work within a system that encourages acceptance of middle class values. There follow a few examples of how schools themselves can contribute to the under achievement of the working classes:

Trips — the materially deprived often struggle to afford school trips. Some schools are addressing the problem by way of 'voluntary contribution' policies BUT often, if not enough money is contributed, the trip does not take place (or only those that pay attend). This obviously has an effect on equality in achievement.

Uniform — supposed to break down class barriers, but is extremely costly for parents whose children may otherwise wear second hand clothes. A controversial issue.

'Praise and Reward' policies — although intended to recognise any form of 'improvement', these policies often clearly reward behaviour that middle class children are accustomed to (e.g. in example 3, a table point was awarded for the child who understood the 'elaborated code').

'Technology' — it is becoming increasingly important for students to have Internet access to aid their study. Working class students' are less likely to be able to access the variety of information available to the middle classes.

...The list goes on...

But why do our schools work this way? Moreover, are they *intended* to work this way? Two approaches to education and their views on inequality will now be discussed. The Functionalist Perspective (based largely on the works of Davis and Moore, 1967; Durkheim, 1947, 1968; Parsons, 1960, 1964 (cited in Bartlett *et al*, 2001, pp.4-8; Hill and Cole (2001) ch.7; Hill, cited in Matheson and

Grovesnor, 2000, ch.7) is based on the premise that education works alongside other social institutions to maintain the whole society. Its main functions are: the development of basic skills (i.e. Literacy/Numeracy); socialisation into acceptance of culture, norms and values; social control/maintaining social order, and preparation for work (role allocation) (Bartlett *et al*, 2001, p.8). This results in social reproduction:

> By reinforcing the status quo these functions actually benefit those who are in the best positions. They maintain stability and thus it is easier for those at the top to ensure that their children follow in their footsteps. Those at the bottom are, by and large, kept there. It is pointed out that it is largely their own fault for not taking the opportunities on offer. Thus, inequality is perpetuated and regarded as 'natural' (*ibid*).

The school system works then to serve the interests of the ruling classes. Inequalities are necessary for economic stability - Functionalists assume that if a properly meritocratic school system were set up, everyone would have equal chance of success (Hill and Cole, 2001, p.145).

For Marxists (such as Althusser; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu, 1977; Sarup, 1983, cited in Bartlett *et al*, 2001, p.9); Hill and Cole, 2001, ch.7; Hill, cited in Matheson and Grovesnor, 2000, ch.7), the purpose of formal education is also seen as maintaining social order and perpetuating existing inequalities, to reproduce capitalist society culturally, economically and ideologically. Capitalism relies on schools slotting certain people into certain sectors of the economy (Hill and Cole, 2001, p.148 - with reference to Bowles and Gintis, 1976). Unlike Functionalists however, Marxists believe this to be immoral, and in need of radical change (Hill and Cole, 2001, p.148). Working class failure is also partly a result of the 'hidden curriculum', which regulates attitudes and behaviour. However, writers such as Giroux, McLaren, Allman and Harker have stressed the role of teachers and students in 'resisting the reproduction of capitalism and agitating for social change' (*ibid*, p.149), as the working classes must become 'class-conscious' (i.e. aware of their own exploitation) in order for social change to occur.

So what, if anything can be done to improve things for working class students and bring more equality into education? The role of the teacher and their interaction with their pupils is vital. Teachers have the power to change pupils' feelings towards themselves, their teachers and their subjects:

> The fact that teachers have so much power is a matter of concern, especially for the teachers. The 'power' is not a question of automatic command but of centrality, of being seen as the mainstay of learning.

> They replace the subject as a centre of attention. They create or destroy different subjects through their relationship with the pupils (Cullingford, 2002, p.132).

Cullingford states that "the experience of school is focused on teachers" (2002, p.134) and that if social relationships are healthy, "all else follows" (p.135). As he explains, the view held by pupils with regard to teachers is well researched and longstanding (p.119) and he notes that "once the main purpose of school is lost...all that is left is the need for oppression, for discipline, for the insistence on obedience" (p.122).

These possible 'causes' for pupils feelings of oppression suggest the need for a more progressive pedagogy within the system. The current education system gives the same expectations to all pupils (in regard to academic results and behaviour), resulting in the 'failure' of many children academically, thus affecting personal and social aspects of the child's development and often leaving them with negative feelings towards school and education in general. Progressive education is child-centred, focusing on the readiness, interests, needs and skills of the child (Hill and Cole, 2001, p.15; Bartlett *et al*, 2001, p.14). Usually the progressive classroom will also be a democratic one with the teacher fulfilling the role of 'guide' as opposed to 'boss' (Shotton, 1990, pp.8-9), which helps to eliminate the problems of understanding the teacher's apparent inconsistencies in discipline and style. William Godwin also advocated discussion amongst children, stressing the importance of 'real' – not 'mock' discussion in order that they develop free, rational consciousness.

The role of the teacher is still vital in this environment – as Armstrong states: "Guidance is paramount. Without the systematic help of tutors or pedagogues only a few students are likely to direct their own learning successfully" (cited in Shotton, 1990, p.9).

Teachers have been constantly bombarded with imposed change of the education system in recent years. These changes, as recognised by Cullingford (2002, p.119), have contributed substantially to the deterioration of relationships experienced between children and their teachers. Without such outside pressure, perhaps teachers would be able to devote their time and attention to their students in such a way that would allow the development of trusting, healthy relationships in school.

There are clearly also issues regarding the content and nature of the curriculum that cause dilemmas for left-wing students like myself. If the school curriculum's subject matter were chosen largely in terms of its contribution to helping children to live a full

life, rather than in relation to the short-term needs of the economy, things could be very different.[8] A school's budget though is possibly its most restricting factor, more restrictive in all probability than its governing body or parental influence. There are so many suggestions made for 'better' schooling, more success and happiness, but they all require money. A school that did not have to worry about what it could afford would be open to immeasurable possibilities, with great significance for the improvement of teacher/pupil relationships.

Concerning a school curriculum, emphasis should be placed on 'subjects' that would be beneficial to both individuals and society in a holistic sense as opposed to an approach required for the continuance of capitalist society. Far more of the school day should be devoted to physical exercise (it is recommended that children are active outdoors for a minimum of thirty minutes a day), rather than mental exercise at desks. Schools (particularly primary) have been forced to cut back on P.E. time due to the pressures of the National Curriculum and children are becoming obese and unfit (at the cost of the NHS). Along these same lines, children need to receive proper information and training on diet and other health issues. Health is vital to a full and happy life, so it would follow that children require guidance on such issues from an early age. In the same spirit, environmental issues such as recycling and renewable energy sources should be at the forefront of all school teaching and practice.

If counselling and advice were made available to children, it would follow that they are more likely to become able to understand their feelings and be reflective in later life. This could have a significant effect on current anti-social problems. Emphasis should also be placed on exploration of cultural and religious issues, given the current climate of 'terror'. Children should be given unbiased information and time should be spent discussing issues in culturally diverse situations. The importance of tolerance to all others in life should be greatly encouraged. Like-minded educators would also greatly promote the introduction of politics, sociology and philosophy.

Similarly, more attention needs to be paid to Personal Health and Social Education. This subject concentrates on social and emotional issues which are relevant to all our lives – drug/alcohol awareness, relationship advice, family issues etc. In 2000, Bramall and White argued that the government ought to rethink the school curriculum from a top-down approach in line with the aims put forward in the post-2000 National Curriculum.[9] They believed that politicians had not previously considered the purposes of school education,

although they had taken responsibility for the content – this, they say, is inverted logic. Referring to the perceived ignorance of past government curriculum developers who "excelled at putting carts before horses" until the truth "dawned on them" (p.2) (see also the analogy of carpenters, p.1), Bramall and White (2000) still expressed scepticism towards future government reform. They did acknowledge the introduction of Personal, Social and Health Education (PHSE) and Citizenship into the curriculum, but still, they say, the majority of the problem lies in the foundation subjects established in 1988.

Bramall and White suggest changes to the curriculum – including the introduction of sociology, cultural studies and elementary ethics, but focusing particularly on changes within the fields of history, maths and modern foreign languages. They argue the case for making modern history compulsory until sixteen, on the grounds that the new aims "suggest a more extensive understanding of the modern world" (p.4), and for making mathematics voluntary – questioning its importance to "personal fulfilment and civic involvement" (p.5). They also suggest that a 'brief taster' in a modern foreign language is all that is necessary. They believed that these measures were what were needed for children to live a fuller life.

So far as the academic side of the curriculum, literacy and numeracy skills are of paramount importance. Detailed guidance in these areas can be provided as a basis for independent learning tasks in other subjects. The role of the teacher would be as a guide to study skills and to provide constructive feedback on children's individual studies. The subjects studied should be decided on a basis of individual interest and ability, as measured by a system such as Kudos[10], which encourages self-exploration and recognition of individual skills and talents. On the extreme end of the scale, a curriculum would be possible that was individually tailored to the needs of each child. For teachers in a money conscious school this sort of learning would be highly impractical. In a school with no budget however, the teacher/child ratio could be increased and one-to-one tuition would be available. This would be particularly beneficial to those children who require special needs assistance and are often not given the attention they require due to financial issues. Even in a school which followed a policy of group teaching as opposed to individual curricula, class sizes would be smaller as the school would not rely on numbers for grants, and the children would be able to work more at their own pace with as much time as required being devoted to their needs.

Numerous studies have shown that children from working class backgrounds consistently under-perform academically in comparison to middle class children. There are many contributing factors to this end, but material deprivation is certainly one of them. Children from deprived backgrounds are less likely to have the same facilities as richer families provide, such as computers and textbooks. If teachers did not have to be concerned with what the school could afford, children from such backgrounds could be given the same level of material input as their peers, thus generating a greater equality in learning. Similarly the drama, art, music and science resources available to schools with no financial boundaries would be immense.

With money as no object, all the needs of a child could be catered for – curriculum-based or otherwise. A teacher unconcerned about money would be able to recommend children for counselling and individual support if they felt it would help. Such a teacher would be free to offer all the solutions possible to children who may suffer behavioural difficulties, before having no choice but to exclude them from the school for the sake of the other learners. These children would then be given every chance possible before becoming 'drop outs'. More money would also allow more time and staff for communication and bonding with children with low self-expectation or esteem. This would allow teachers to do the best they can for all pupils. The possibilities for the school with no financial limitations are endless. Needless to say, the student/teacher relationship would undoubtedly improve - school would be a very different place to the environment most of us experience and the changes to society would be enormous.

However, in the past twenty years, the language of educational discourse has shifted away from being "child-centred" to being corporate-oriented. LEAs now have to cater to the 'business environment'. The Schools White Paper of October 2005 has only served to reinforce negative expectations upon the government regarding educational reform. As Rikowski and Rikowski (2006) state:

> ...This is what the White Paper is fundamentally about: part of the beginning of the business takeover of the state school system, and beyond this, to the commodification of educational services ... (p.4).

Dave Hill also realises that recent education reform has been concerned:

> ... to smooth the way for direct profit-taking/profiteering from education. It is about how capital wants to make direct profits from education. This centres on setting business 'free' in education for

profit-making and profit-taking by capital, extracting profits from privately controlled/owned schools … (Hill, 2005, p.260).

Rikowski and Rikowski (2006, p.5) say that this is just what the White Paper is for.

From the 'utopian' approaches just described, school would provide a firm foundation for a well-rounded individual to be able to make informed decisions regarding their own happiness and well being in later life. In order to achieve a system of this nature considerable time and money would be required, but the benefits to society in the long run would be apparent. A happy work force is a productive work force, so although it is not the sole intention, the economy would benefit from this type of education. Let's face it, if the government can find enough money to fight an illegal war, they can surely find the money to fund this type of education if they were actually committed to change.

As previously stated, my desire is to teach Lower Primary children – i.e. 3-7 year olds, but will this go against my principles? This depends upon the manner in which the classroom is run: so what does the research say about early formal education?

Three long-term studies began in the 1970s (noted by Fujikane, 2004), each studying groups of children learning. Some children experienced 'direct instruction' (teacher directed, academic style), and others were placed in a nursery model ('child initiated' learning activities). Children were placed randomly, regardless of IQ, social background etc. All 3 studies found that direct instruction led to children intellectually outperforming the 'child centred' group up to and including the year after Pre-School, but after that, the balance tipped. In 1 study, 78% of the child-initiated group graduated high school compared with just 48% of the group who experienced direct instruction (this pattern is also apparent from studies of the Norwegian school system (both cited in Fujikane, 2004, p.2).

According to Marcon (1992), children who delay academic practice have better verbal skills, and Dunn's research team (1994) found that receptive language skills are more developed allowing greater capacity for reading ability when they begin to learn. In addition, Shermon and Mueller (1996) found reading and maths scores were higher in 2nd grade for children who were being educated in what they call a 'developmentally appropriate' environment rather than didactic academic learning. To Schwienhart (1997), research suggests that formal academic instruction is likely to improve short-term cognitive skills at the risk of more damaging effects on social and emotional development. There is of course also the danger in early academic instruction that those who are incapable of early

achievement feel incompetent. This can lead to numerous behavioural and social problems that are difficult to fix later. This is particularly the case in the socially disadvantaged - in fact some American studies have suggested that children who are subject to early formal education are 3 times more likely to go to prison, twice as likely to be expelled and are significantly more likely to have poor marital or family relationships as well as difficulty in holding a job.[11] Katz (1999) also wisely points out that: "it is clearly not useful for a child to learn skills if, in the process of acquiring them, the disposition to use them is lost" e.g. there is no point teaching a child to read if by pushing them too soon they are unlikely to want to read as they get older.

So, the majority of studies indicate that a didactic, formal approach to learning is not necessary in the early years to develop cognitive academic skills, and it could lead to social and emotional difficulties later on. It is though my hope, that in a reception/key stage one classroom, there are still relatively fewer pressures on children to learn academically, and a less formal and more critical approach can be adopted. Children of this age group have the natural 'why?' instinct, and if this is not stifled at an early age, a critical mind is more likely to develop. I hope to equip my students with the skills of critical thinking from the outset of their school lives.

Education and Indoctrination

Thinking as a future teacher, I am becoming increasingly concerned with the whole concept of indoctrinating the children I teach. This is because at present they are being indoctrinated into capitalist thought through the 'actual' and 'hidden' curricula – this only aids in their commodification.

In his 1964 work, Wilson attempts to identify exactly what the objection to indoctrination is, and to advise as to how it may be avoided in the classroom. By the use of an analogy - describing a boy being hypnotised to master A' level physics - Wilson concludes that the opposition to indoctrination is not with the method employed, but with the type of subject matter being conveyed to the individual. Wilson believes that cases such as those described above should not be described as indoctrination, as the subject matter is unobjectionable – and indoctrination, he states, "represents...something pernicious" (1964, p.26). Describing the obvious historical cases of indoctrination, he states that our hostility towards the idea is not, as may be thought, in response to the deeply personal nature of political, religious and moral beliefs, but is

in fact due to their uncertainty. Wilson explains that, as rational people all over the world hold different ideological, moral and religious beliefs, we have no logical right to be sure of any 'correct' answers in areas such as this – any attempt to do so could be a highly dangerous activity, as can be recalled through "blood-stained history". Therefore, to avoid repeating such mistakes, Wilson goes on to explain how he believes teachers can avoid indoctrination. Wilson states that the beliefs (this would include ideologies) that are taught must be rational. This means, he explains, that they must have the 'general weight of evidence in their favour' and that they must be backed by publicly accepted evidence. Teaching, according to Wilson, should be 'graded' according to the logical status of the matter being taught – certainties (or as much as can be described as certain) may be taught as such, probabilities taught as probabilities, and uncertainties must not be taught. He states that the teacher must be concerned with providing the evidence for beliefs and not with inculcating the actual beliefs, and that the pupil must always be given opportunity, present or future, to reject the ideas presented to them.

Although he is correct in his suggestion that the teachers must concern themselves with evidence – and in giving the student the opportunity for rejection – there are some issues within Wilson's argument that must be addressed.

Firstly, before addressing how to avoid indoctrination, Wilson's definition of indoctrination is questionable. He assumes that the objection to it is unrelated to the method, and "is rather a difference in subject-matter" (Wilson, 1964, p.26). His definition is then rooted firmly in what is being indoctrinated and not the process of indoctrination itself. He states that: "if we want to keep the word 'indoctrination' as the name of a forbidden area, we shall probably want to say that these [learning through hypnosis etc] are not cases of indoctrination" (p.26). This will not suffice. Indoctrination is also a process, and so discussion must involve observations of objections to method as well as to content. His argument allows for the hypnotic transfer of 'certainties' in the sense of mathematics and Latin Grammar, but - whilst the position of such activities is debatable in its status as indoctrination as such (they would by some be considered indoctrination), they certainly could not be regarded as educational. Peters (1967, p.2), drawing on the work of Ryle, defines education as primarily an 'achievement' word but also a 'task' word, meaning that it must involve conscious activity on the part of the learner - ruling out hypnosis or 'downloading' information. So according to Peters' view, educational processes cannot include this type of learning.[12]

'Evidence' and 'rational methods' are also, as philosophers such as Laura (1983) and Neiman (1989, cited in Tan, 2004, p.258) observe, the focal points of any discussion on indoctrination. Wilson states that the general weight of evidence must be in their favour for beliefs to be considered rational. It must be noted here that the teacher may provide evidence in abundance (for beliefs or ideologies) – this does not necessarily rule out indoctrination. Evidence, as Wilson acknowledges, can be found in support of just about anything, and teachers can provide one-sided, selective, or narrow evidence to support the supposed rationality of a belief or idea. The events of World War Two (and many other historical events) are, for example, taught with different foci depending upon the country involved. Wilson attempts to deal with this problem by stating that evidence must be publicly accepted (1964, p.28), but this is where the second problem with his account lies - the notion of evidence must be examined further.

As well as being subject to change over time, 'publicly accepted evidence' is not necessarily accepted on a rational basis. The public are not all capable of obtaining empirical evidence first hand, or of intellectually determining its existence by the use of rational logic, and so at some point are subject to the interpretations of intellectual authorities. Take DNA, for example. There are few who know for certain that such a thing exists, therefore most of us must rely on the authority of others in relation to knowledge about it. The existence of DNA is backed by evidence that few understand, and can only interpret through others. Yet, its existence is clearly publicly accepted – the judicial system relies heavily on it. Therefore, if evidence is subject to intellectual authorities, this leaves room also for the possibility of hegemonic distortion, and thus, intentional or not, the possible indoctrination of irrational ideas. Indeed, our children are being indoctrinated with capitalist ideology as we speak.

So there is my dilemma. There are many other issues I have with the existing education system and its effects on the nature of society, as well as the ones discussed in this piece. But what can I do about it? I am, after all, just one person in a huge system – I can't make a difference. But what if I can? I am not deluding myself here that I can change the world for everyone – that would be arrogant, and based on the assumption that only 'my view' is 'right'. If however I can provide just some children with the skills they will need to continue the fight for social change, surely the classroom is the best place for me. I can make more contribution to the anti-capitalist cause by giving it a shot in my classroom than I can by just complaining about it all. I am certain that I can make more impact on the movement as an active education worker, influencing

the minds of the next generation, and hopefully changing the chances of just a few of them:

> "Good teachers swim against the current every day, teaching from the understanding that students are capable of comprehending and changing the world. Teachers do not have to be missionaries for capitalism and some, though far too few, are not" (Gibson, in Feldman and Lotz, 2004, p.248).

Finally, the question remains as to whether or not I will be able to fulfil my own human needs in this career, or if my life will be a constant battle against a system that will attempt to control me. To do this will mean absolute commitment to the cause, constant self-awareness and reflection. Teachers must keep focussed on their ideals, resisting the system – aided by the support of like-minded colleagues. I can be an idealistic teacher - why not? If I give in, where is the hope for education for social change? If everyone who felt that the world is in need of change became more pro-active, the world *would* change. Teaching puts me in the best position to understand the effects of capitalism at a grass roots level, and to attempt to combat them and put a stopper in the organic reproduction of the capitalist agenda.

Notes:

1. See Feldman and Lotz (2004) for explanation of the Thatcherite TINA statement – 'There Is No Alternative' (p.296).

2. Deschooling aims at the development of full, critically conscious people committed to social transformation. For an in depth explanation of its components see Piluso's work (Oct-Dec 1991) in 'Anarchist Quarterly'

3. Libertarianism is 'rooted in opposition to all forms of coercion' and stems from the work of John Locke (influenced by Godwin). See Shotton (1990) and Marshall (1998, pp.367-368).

4. William Godwin, "Of The Communication of Knowledge", *Enquirer,* IX in Anon (und) *William Godwin on Education*.

5. William Godwin, "Of Choice in Reading", *Enquirer,* IX in Anon (und) *William Godwin on Education*.

6. Studies have been carried out by various researchers, e.g. in relation to juvenile delinquency there is evidence of shared physical and personality traits such as; sturdier bodies; increased aggression; extrovert; impulsive; narcissistic. There is also however a strong correlation with social factors such as; family breakdown; single or no parent families; alcohol/drug abusing parents; poverty; abuse; erratic discipline and media influence. Studies on multiple births and adopted children have also revealed findings to support both sides of the debate. See Comptons Interactive Encyclopaedia, and Gale and Eysenck (1992) for information.

7. The first use of the term sociobiology likely dates to the work of Warder C. Allee, Alfred E. Emerson, and their associates in their 1949 book, *Principles of*

Animal Ecology. Modern Sociobiology centers on E.O. Wilson's *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (1970). He defined it as "the systematic study of the biological basis of all behaviour". It is the study of all social species and has analysed human behaviour in relation to genes (e.g. criminal behaviour can be analysed through sociobiology). As explained by Trigg: "sociobiology seizes on the notion of the gene as the unit of evolution, and tries to trace significant aspects of behaviour back to the continuing influence of genes as they are passed on from one generation to the next. The aim of behaviour would be seen as the maximizing of genetic fitness, in the sense that behaviour that led to the disappearance of the genes producing it would itself disappear. The behaviour which persists is that which enables particular genes to reproduce" (Trigg, 1982, p.X). In short, sociobiology is concerned with the social interactions within a given species and focuses on such issues as whether certain traits are inherited or are culturally induced (Compton's interactive encyclopedia).

8. The ranges of possible responses to the questions posed about curriculum content are as vast as the range of opinions on what constitutes a 'full life'. For some this may be interpreted as a life filled with adventure and excitement, for others, a stable and secure financial existence is enough, and yet again for others all that they require is the presence of a family and friends to be fulfilled. For me, and for the purpose of this argument, a 'full life' means a holistic life, with equal emphasis placed upon physical, mental, social and emotional well-being.

9. The authors have been careful in their use of language to avoid assumption that they are referring to education in the E_3 sense (see Hamm, 1989, pp.30-31); rather they are talking about E_2 type school education. It would, according to Hamm (44-58) be illogical to discuss the aims of education if discussing E_3 education, the value of which is deemed intrinsic, requiring therefore no aims. Instead, the authors of this piece refer to the 'purposes' and 'goals' of school education when using their own words, only talking of 'aims and values' in the context of the government proposals.

10. Kudos is a computer programme used in Careers Guidance. It follows a series of questions answered by the student, and then offers a range of possible career choices suited to their interests and self-recognised skills or abilities.

11. According to Funk (1995b) cited in Funk (1998).

12. Peters' philosophy of education has been defined by Hamm as "the achievement of a desirable state of mind characterised by knowledge and understanding in breadth and depth with cognitive perspective...brought about deliberately, in a manner not to infringe upon the voluntariness and wittingness on the part of the learner" (1989, p.39, my emphasis). His view, though widely debated has, according to Hamm (1989, p.32), met no successful challenges to its central claims. The criterion laid down in order for someone to be considered 'educated' in Peters' view, are based in standards of knowledge that favour certain areas of society. Although Hamm, in his analysis of this issue, believes in the 'random distribution of talent at birth' (1989, p.41), there has been overwhelming evidence in recent years that suggests that a large proportion of the population, due to issues such as class, race or gender, may be given little opportunity to even attempt to meet such demanding criteria. But Peters' argument also raises the issue of voluntary, active participation of the learner. Formal schooling is compulsory - indeed if children do not go then their parents face prosecution. Peters' view would suggest then that none of our children are actually receiving any form of education. Of course, it is possible that children forced to attend school will still partake voluntarily in their lessons, but if they do

not want to attend in the first place, this is surely "infringing upon their wittingness".

In his notion of education and what it is to be an 'educated person', R.S. Peters has attempted to provide an account to be sustained irrelevant to the circumstances of the era. Time, culture and politics inevitably change the aims and purposes of education as the society it exists within transforms. What is considered worthwhile and intrinsically or morally valuable may differ greatly according to social and historical context. The processes required in order to "bring about a desirable state of mind in a morally unobjectionable manner" (Peters, 1966, p.27) are likely to be debated until the end of time.

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Education and the Politics of Human Resistance

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Introduction

The title and topic for this article derive from the subtitle to an edited collection I produced with Dave Hill, Peter McLaren and Mike Cole in 1999: *Postmodernism in Educational Theory: Education and the Politics of Human Resistance* (Hill *et al*, 1999). For me, the subtitle was not explained or explored adequately in the book, though there is some material on it in Rikowski (1999) and in Neary (1999). In this article, I aim to expand on what I mean by a 'politics of human resistance' and, flowing from this discussion, to indicate the central role that education plays in struggles for progressive social change.

However, in terms of presenting the argument, I start from the opposite end: that is, with the importance of Marxist analysis in terms of locating weak links in the rule of capital, and then demonstrating *via* a discussion on capital's weakest link – labour power – the significance of education for a politics of human resistance. Finally, the article looks at what a politics of human resistance might mean for education for progressive social change.

Marxism and the Weakest Link

The work of John Holloway (1993, 1994, 1995, and 2005) indicates vividly why Marxism has relevance for igniting radical social change today, and also why it has resonance for understanding the significance of education for progressive social change. It is Holloway's insistence that Marxism is not primarily a theory *of* society but a theory *against* society (in Holloway, 1994, pp.38-39) that begins to open up vistas of education as anti-capitalist activity. Of course, a theory *against* society presupposes some understanding and knowledge *of* society, notes Holloway (1995, p.156). In the same way, to generate an anti-capitalist education, a form of education *against* capitalist education, knowledge of the history and development of education systems and processes is essential. These points require elaboration.

For Holloway, Marxism articulates theoretically our anger; our scream of refusal to tolerate contemporary capitalist society and its allied human condition: its wars, multiple inequalities, and its

infinite social drives that disfigure working life and social relationships. This anger, this refusal is the starting point for critical analysis of capitalist society, and once lost sight of the point of a critical social theory such as Marxism becomes brittle, and ultimately breaks off. Thus, the starting point is the scream:

> In the beginning was the scream. When we talk or write, it is all too easy to forget that the beginning was not the word, but the scream. Faced with the destruction of human lives by capitalism, a scream of sadness, a scream of horror, above all a scream of anger, of refusal: NO. The starting point of theoretical reflection is opposition, negativity, struggle. The role of theory is to elaborate that scream, to express its strength and to contribute to its power, to show how the scream resonates through society and to contribute to that resonance (Holloway, 2005, p.15).

According to Holloway, this is the 'origin of Marxism', or at least why we should be interested in Marxism: a theory that amplifies the scream and shoots its sound into all known areas of capitalist social life. However, Marxism is not the only theory that purports to be against society. There are other candidates. So why is Marxism best able to articulate the scream?

Holloway acknowledges that Feminism, Anarchism, Green theory and theories that develop anti-racism are significant (1994, p.39) in terms of providing oppositionist theoretical resources. Furthermore, he also indicates that these theories and other critical theories articulate various aspects of capitalist oppression: racism, sexism, the degradation of the environment, curtailments of various freedoms and so on – and they have developed substantial insights into these issues of life in capitalist society. Holloway also accepts that Marxism has not always addressed adequately Green issues, sexism, personal and social freedoms and so on – though I believe this point can be pressed too far, as Mike Cole argues in the case of 'race', where Marxists have made significant contributions (see Cole, forthcoming 2007). However, argues Holloway, there is a crucial difference between Marxism and other theories of radical change such as Feminism and Green theory: Marxism takes *negativity* much further:

> It interprets the whole of society in terms of the force which negates this society, the power of labour. That is what makes it so powerful as a theory of revolutionary change. For Marxism the 'them' who dominate are not external to 'us' who are dominated. Capital is nothing other than alienated labour. The scream of Marxism is a promethean scream: we are everything, there are no gods, no superhuman forces. People are the sole creators, it is labour alone which constitutes social reality (Holloway, 1993, p.19).

Furthermore, while other radical theories are theories of social domination or oppression:

> ... Marxism takes that oppression as its starting point. The question of Marxism is not: 'how do we understand social oppression?', but: 'given

that we live in an oppressive society, how can we understand the *fragility* of that oppression?' (Holloway, 1994, p.39 – my emphasis).

Thus: for Marxism, 'the whole analysis of capitalism is developed through the perspective of its fragility' (ibid.). What sets Marxism apart from other radical theories such as Feminism is 'the *total* character of its negation' of capitalist society (Holloway, 1995, p.159 – my emphasis). The social validity of Marxism as a theory against society rests on its capacity to locate the fragility of capitalist social domination; to locate the weak points in the rule of capital. In pursuing and realising the fragility of capitalist social domination, in locating the weak points in capital's empire, the scream of refusal turns into the scream of power as we come to realise that:

> We are the only reality, the only power. There is nothing but us, nothing but our negativity. That is why the scream of refusal is a scream of power (Holloway, 1995, p.159).

Additionally:

> It is through understanding that 'they' are *not* external to us, that capital is *not* external to labour, that we can understand the vulnerability of capitalist domination. To move beyond the externality of 'them-against-us' is at the same time to go beyond a radical theory of oppression to the concern of Marxism: the *fragility* of oppression Holloway, 1995, p.159 – original emphases).

The constitution or our 'selves' as capital and labour incorporates not only tensions within capital itself but the contradictions between capital and labour. We are divided against ourselves, argues Holloway (1994, p.41). Marxism is not just a theory of capitalist oppression, but it is also a theory that articulates the contradictions of that oppression, notes Holloway, and:

> This gives Marxism a special relevance for any person or movement interested in a radical transformation of society (1994, p.40).

It is by analysing the contradictions of capitalist oppression that weak points in capital's existence can be located, and then these can become the point of focus, critique and political action. In its project of pinpointing fragilities in capitalist oppression Marxism facilitates the formation of political strategies of maximum effect. It is in this that its anti-capitalist validity ultimately resides.

But how does all of this relate to *education* for progressive social change? A couple of points of elaboration will suffice here before moving on to answer this question in the rest of this article.

First, the point about Marxism's capacity for dissolving all in negativity is important. New Labour's education policy since the mid-1990s has focused on a number of theories and projects for social change that suggest *positivity*. All the twists and turns of New Labour education strategy since 1993 have involved projecting positive visions and outlooks. As I noted in 2000, in terms of ideas

guiding Tony Blair's varied visions for a New Britain (which each have consequences for education, some more obvious and direct than others):

> Intellectually, Blair has been promiscuous. Over the last seven or eight years he has expressed interest in: the learning society (Labour Party, 1994); Etzioni's communitarianism (1993); Hutton's concept of stakeholder capitalism (1995); the writings of the *Demos* think tank; Giddens' concept of the Third Way (1998); and, most recently, Leadbeater's Knowledge Economy (1999). It may be that Blair's thinking is moving away from the nebulous 'third way' towards developing something more tangible on the back of the knowledge economy (Rikowski, 2000a, p.4).

It would be possible to take each of these frameworks for a New Britain in turn and work out their consequences for education policy and indicate their essential positivity. However, let us take the most glaringly relevant of these ideas in terms of its consequences for education: the Learning Society. Defining the learning society is not easy, as Ranson (1998) and Rikowski (1998) make clear. There are various visions and models of, and perspectives on, the Learning Society (see Rikowski, 1998, pp.215-219). Ranson (1998, pp.4-10) summarises the Learning Society as:

- A society which needs to change the way it learns (bringing in lifelong learning, informal learning, and making formal education more relevant)

- A society in which all its members are learning

- A society which learns to democratically change the conditions of learning.

Yet this is still an abstract conception, unrelated to the form and nature of the society in which we currently find ourselves: capitalist society. When the Learning Society is viewed in relation to really existing capitalist society then the problems begin, and it melds into a capitalist social form where learning becomes subservient to commodity production, value-creation and ultimately profit-making, with the requisite education policies to validate and develop these outcomes (see Rikowski, 1998 and 2004b). The key point is that in a Learning Society lodged within capitalism, learning is constituted as being related to economic competitiveness in a globalising world (see Rikowski, 2001). Thus, what starts out as something positive, a Learning Society where the quality and quantity of learning are key, degenerates into negativity: learning is cast under the shadow of value-creation within contemporary capitalist society. Marxism show how this process operates; how something that appears to be as good as Mother's apple pie can turn into yet another tentacle that binds our souls to capital. Education for social change should include uncovering how apparent positives (e.g. social inclusion, lifelong learning, higher education 'standards', or creativity in

education), when set in the context of capital's social universe, become negatives. Positivity dissolves into negativity.

Secondly, this indicates the significance of relentless critique of education policies and practices. Education for social change begins with the critique of existing education systems, policies, practises and phenomena. This critique implies not just a critique of capitalist education but simultaneously capitalist society. It further implies a:

> ... critique of all forms of inequality in capitalist society – class inequality, sexism, racism, discrimination against gay and lesbian people, ageism and differential treatment of other social groups – and how all of these forms of inequality link to capital accumulation and value production (Rikowski, 2004a, p.567).

What is required ultimately is a critique of all known capitalist social life (Rikowski, 2004, p.568). However, this is only the first moment of education for progressive social change, the other two being meeting human needs and opening up realms of freedom (see Rikowski, 2004, pp.568-569), and these three moments can be related productively (p.570). But to show these relationships is beyond the scope of this article, and all I would argue here is the more limited point: critique is crucial for education for progressive social change.

Finally, returning directly to Holloway's project for Marxism, to use it to uncover the contradictions, tensions and weak links within the dominion of capital, education for progressive social change is crucial. This is due to the fact that in capitalist society education is involved in the social production of the single, unique and most special commodity within the realm of capital: labour power. Labour power is the capacity to labour, which is sold in the labour market. Today, this sale is obscured to some extent by a complex canopy of labour contracts, recruitment practices, labour relations and the various laws regulating these areas. Once sold to capital for a wage, the managers of capital seek to ensure that the labour power is used productively in the actual labour process: i.e. to produce value and surplus-value (value over and above that represented by the wage) and profits (surplus-value minus the expenses of production). Labour power must be transformed into labour in the capitalist labour process to the extent that surplus-value and profits are attained. Thus, labour power is that precious commodity which produces value and surplus-value on which the expansion of capital depends. Furthermore, labour power is like no other commodity in capital's social universe: it is incorporated within labourers themselves. It is part of their personhoods, like no other commodity. It is under the sway of potentially hostile wills. It is owned by the labourers; it is their commodity. Thus, not only is labour power the supreme commodity it is also one that capital can never completely own in terms of the personhood of the labourer (for if it did then that would constitute slave society) and therefore

ever have sufficient control over. As the supreme commodity, labour power is an enigma, a nightmare for capital yet simultaneously the source of the very constitution and existence of capital. Together, this explosive concoction makes labour power capital's *weakest link*. The following two sections expand on this point through the work of Karl Marx.

The Fuel that Generates the Life We Know: Labour Power

> The whole system of capitalist production is based on the fact that the workman sells his labour-power as a commodity (Karl Marx, *Capital – volume 1*, 1867a, p.405).

Karl Marx opens his *magnum opus*, the first volume of *Capital*, with the statement that:

> The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as "an immense accumulation of commodities," its unit being a single commodity. Our investigation must therefore begin with the analysis of a commodity (Marx, 1867a, p.43).

Thus, Marx started his analysis and critique of capital not with capital itself, but with the commodity. He had realised that the commodity was the perfect beginning for the analysis of capital and the critique of political economy several years earlier in his notes on the *Grundrisse* (Marx, 1858). Only in Notebook VII, after over eight hundred pages of the 1973 edition of the *Grundrisse* does Marx announce that: 'This section to be brought forward' (in Marx, 1858, p.881). Marx started with the commodity as it was the 'economic cell form' of capitalist society (1867b, p.19). The unfolding of the structuring features incorporated within the commodity form in capitalist society – value, use-value, and exchange-value posited on the basis of abstract labour as measured by labour-time – allowed Marx to simultaneously uncover key aspects of the constitution and nature of capital. Marx saw the commodity as the condensed 'general form of the product' in capitalist society, according to Moishe Postone (1996, p.148). The commodity was the 'most elementary form of bourgeois wealth' (Marx, 1863, p.173). Thus, the commodity was the perfect starting point for Marx's analysis of capital and the critique of political economy.

However, what is less well known is that in the first volume of *Theories of Surplus Value*, Marx makes a crucial distinction between the general class of commodities and the commodity that is in a class of its own: labour power. Marx notes that:

> The whole world of "commodities" can be divided into two great parts. First, labour power; second, commodities as distinct from labour power itself (Marx, 1863, p.167).

This point is reiterated (in Marx, 1863, p.171). Thus: labour power is in a class of its own, and later we shall see why this is so. In *Capital*, at least for the first two volumes, Marx did not pay much attention to the social production of labour power. Rather, he assumed that labour power was 'always on hand' (Marx, 1878, p.577) and its social production did not therefore need particular explanation. Furthermore, Marx appeared to be mainly interested in labour power in the first two volumes of *Capital* in terms of how the value of labour power itself was determined which had consequences for the rate of surplus-value extraction. Empirically, the social production of labour power was a very weak and under-developed process when Marx was writing *Capital* – especially in England, where a national system of education figuring as an effective productive force in relation to labour power was slow in developing compared to many other European countries. Only in the third volume of *Capital* (Marx, 1865) does Marx venture to say something explicit on labour power's social production in terms of how education contributes towards this, as we shall see in the next section.

So, what is labour power? For Marx, labour power is:

> ... the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in a human being, which he exercises whenever he produces a use-value of any description (1867a, p.164).

Thus, on this characterisation, labour power has real social existence only when it is transformed into actual labour (when producing use-values) in the labour process. The point about the labourer 'exercising' her mental and physical capabilities is also important, as it refers to acts of will on the part of the labourer in organising their own skills and capabilities in the service of capital in the production of commodities as use-values (which also contain value). As I have argued elsewhere (Rikowski, 1990) what is to be included in 'mental capabilities' is contentious, and on the basis of empirical research on recruitment in the engineering industry (Ibid.) I would include work and social attitudes and personality traits as examples of 'mental capabilities' incorporated within labour power. The typical focus on skills, physical abilities and knowledge posits an impoverished version of human capital that does not even make sense empirically in terms of what employers demand in the recruitment process (Ibid.). This focus of attitudes (especially work attitudes) and personality traits reflects the fact that:

> In general, labour power – the capacity to labour does not simply mean the *ability* to perform physical or mental work. It means in addition, the willingness to do so under another's control, regardless of whether this control is direct or indirect, and whether it is exercised by a private capital or by social capital (Harvie, 2006, p.6).

The subsumption of the *will* of the worker under capital to a certain extent, not just their capabilities and capacities, is crucial.

The crucial point is that labour power is the special commodity that generates value, which is the substance of the social universe of capital (Neary and Rikowski, 2000), and hence of capital itself as capital arises, is birthed on the creating of surplus-value – its first social form. As Marx noted, labour power is a 'presupposition of capital' (1858, p.320). Unfortunately for capital, the capitalists and their management helpers, labour power resides within the personhoods, and under the command of the labourers. Labourers fundamentally own their labour powers. It is merely sold to capital for a period of time (the working day, week, year etc.). Representatives of capital have to coax this precious power out of labourers to the maximum in order to compete effectively with others capitals. Labour power, as the aggregation of those mental and physical capabilities existing within labourers and which they put into motion and exercise when they create use values is a *unified* force within humans. It is something that flows throughout the whole person, and its attributes – the itemised skills, knowledges and so on used concretely in production – are organised by the labourer and developed and enhanced within them. Thus, in selling herself to the capitalist the labourers sells her abilities and talents (Marx, 1878, p.285).

The specific use-value of which labour power has for capital is that it creates more value than that represented by the wage (Marx, 1865 and 1867a). It is the only commodity in the social universe of capital that can create, sustain and expand capital through surplus-value production. This establishes its supreme importance in the firmament of commodities. In addition, this magical commodity resides in the personhoods of labourers, and is ultimately under the jurisdiction of their wills. Thus: labour power is the supreme value-creating power on which capital depends for its existence, and it is incorporated within labourers who have the potential to withhold this wonderful social force (through strikes or leaving the employment of a capital) or worse, to use labour power for anti-capitalist activity and ultimately for non-capitalist forms of production. Together, these features make labour power capital's *weakest link*. Capital depends on it, yet it has the capacity to be used by its owners against capital and to open up productive forms which capital no longer dominates. Marx and Marxist analysis uncovers this with a greater force and clarity as compared with any other critical social theory. In indicating the fragility of capital in this way, and in pinpointing its weakest link, Marxist analysis is vindicated and justified.

But where does education come into the picture? The following section explores this question.

Education and Labour Power

> … education produces labour power (Karl Marx, 1863, p.210).

> Those who are engaged with training productive workers are involved with changing the special commodity labour power itself (David Yaffe, 1976, p.12).

In capitalist society, there is pressure to raise the quality of labour power. The general social drive to enhance the quality of human labour power in capitalism is founded on the fact that, everything else being equal, a rise in the quality of labour power leads to a re-division of the working day into necessary labour (as reflected in value represented by the wage) and surplus-labour (as reflected in unpaid labour that produces the surplus-value from which profits derive) in favour of the latter. This is because enhanced labour power quality increases production speeds and quality, harnesses workers to the cause of innovation and makes life easier for managements (and hence cuts managements costs) in a myriad of ways. This general, abstract but real social drive is experienced by individual capitals and the human representatives of capital (capitalists and managers) *concretely* in terms of raising productivity, quality improvement and hence sales and profits. Voluntarism, leaving the enhancement of labour power quality to employers themselves, has a strong tradition in the UK. Yet from the late nineteenth century the state made inroads into providing employment training for youth and also to attempt to ensure that schools provided employers with young people in possession of the kinds of labour power attributes they said they wanted – even though they were unclear or confused about what these attributes were (Rikowski, 2000b).

The pace of state involvement in labour power production and quality enhancement stepped up after the Second World War, especially in England. The 1944 Education Act and the Employment and Training Act of 1948 (see Neary, 1999) provided the legislative framework for a definite system of what I have called the *social production of labour power* through education and training (Rikowski, 1990). The social production of labour power is:

> … the conglomeration of the social processes involved in producing the 'unique' or 'thinking' commodity … Listing institutional form involved in labour-power production we have: schooling; on/off-the-job-training; further and higher education; character and attitude training; the development of abilities in the labour process – as *some* of the elements. Empirical and historical research and analysis is necessary to ascertain the productive forms for particular categories of labour (Rikowski, 1999, pp.75-76).

Thus, in contemporary capitalist society, education and training play increasingly vital roles in producing and developing labour power. Indeed, as I have argued (in Rikowski, 2004b) there is a kind of practical reductionism involved where education and training

policies are being increasingly framed within and justified with reference to human capital (read labour power) production. Wider notions of education unrelated to work preparation are being undermined, denigrated and downgraded – sometimes even by UK Education Ministers: e.g. Charles Clarke's comments about subjects such as ancient history being 'dodgy' in terms of their vocational relevance.

A few years ago, I demonstrated how lifelong learning policy in England is driven by labour power enhancement (see Rikowski, 2004b). Only last week the Confederation of British Industry was castigating the work-readiness of school leavers for the challenges posed by capitalist work. This latest employers' critique of the labour power of youth in the UK was based on research undertaken amongst 140 firms, and was sponsored by the Department for Education and Skills (CBI, 2006a). The resulting Report, *Working on the Three R: Employers' Priorities for Functional Skills in Maths and English* focused on the perceived inadequate maths and English skills of the nation's school leavers. Thus, after James Callaghan's Ruskin College Speech of 1976, the resulting Great Debate on Education, the 1988 Education Reform Act (ushering in the National Curriculum, national testing, SATs, league tables, and then Ofsted), together with New Labour's focus on standards early on after 1997 and then the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Hours – school-leavers' reading, writing and maths are *still* inadequate for employers! The CBI Report (2006a) could have easily have been written in the 1970s or 1980s – though employer criticism of school-leavers declined for a while after the 1988 Education Reform Act.

For the CBI, the stakes are high. As Richard Lambert noted in the *Foreword* to *Working on the Three Rs*:

> As international competition intensifies, it is more important than ever that the UK workforce should not continue to lag behind in terms of basic skills in reading, writing, communicating and making practical use of maths (Lambert, 2006).

Thus: for Lambert, schools are failing to provide the young employees the nation needs to compete in the international economic arena. A CBI press release noted that one in three employers surveyed were sending staff for remedial maths and English tuition (CBI, 2006b, p.1). Last Thursday, when the GCSE results came out the CBI congratulated the students but also "warned that too many were still not achieving the minimum standards in maths and English" (CBI, 2006c, p.1).

The press picked the story up with relish. AOL Lifestyle (2006) framed the story in terms of 'grunting' teenagers unable to communicate effectively. Alexandra Frean (2006) from *The Times*

focused on data from the case studies provided by the Report: e.g. trainee caterers not knowing how to divide a pie into eight equal parts. Rebecca Smithers (2006) in *The Guardian* noted that the CBI wanted more transparency on new modules on "functional skills" (to be piloted from September) in terms of the percentage marks on these (to be introduced in 2008) to be handed over to employers. David Willetts, Conservative Shadow Education Secretary, bemoaned the degree of GCSE coursework. The Schools Minister, Jim Knight went along with the CBI critique, noting apologetically that:

> Every single young person must have a good grasp of the basics. We have done more than any government to make this a reality. We are changing the way we measure performance in these basic skills and toughening up the English and maths GCSEs to ensure that young people master the three Rs. In the future employers will have a guarantee of the quality of the school leavers they are taking on (in Smithers, 2006).

What was interesting about Jon Boone's (2006) report in the *Financial Times* was that he emphasised another employers' survey undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and KPMG which threw up data indicating employers were more interested in 'soft skills'; e.g. work attitudes and personality traits – which typically come out as most significant in research on employers' needs regarding youth labour (see Rikowski, 2000). Hence, the employers in this report "challenged" the findings of the CBI (2006a) Report, noted Boone.

It should be noted that employers have long been dissatisfied with the quality of school-leavers. In the British context, analysis of management journals illustrates employer dissatisfaction with school-leavers and young people going back at least to the First World War. In the early 1980s, I examined the journals of the Industrial Society and the Institute of Personnel Management (which went through various name changes) going back to the 1920s. In both of these journals there was a 'long moan of history' from employers (Rikowski, 2000, p.25) regarding the quality of youth as workers. Yet given that the social drive to enhance the quality of labour power is infinite, employers will never, and can never be satisfied with the labour power quality of school-leavers and young workers. The Long Moan of History is set to continue into the future, unto the death of capitalist society.

Education and the Politics of Human Resistance

What has been established so far through Marxist analysis and critique is that labour power is capital's weakest link and that capitalist education and training are involved in the social production of labour power, and that this involves the reduction of

education and training to labour power production. Thus, if we are serious about using Marxian explorations to uncover the fragility of capital, and in so doing happen to locate capital's weakest link, then we need to follow this through with the requisite and corresponding critique, activism, protests and other forms of political action, and the search for alternatives. Concretely, in practice, what is required, in the first instance, is a *politics of human resistance*.

This politics of human resistance does not really exist in any explicit form today. At its heart is opposition (human resistance) to the reduction of education and training to labour power production. This entails a relentless focus on this form of resistance as the most significant anti-capitalist strategy. It has the potential to be the most effective anti-capitalist strategy as it drives at capital's *weakest link*: labour power. On this analysis, existing Left groups and parties tend to merely react to events (wars, atrocities, government and ministerial corruption, atrocious business behaviour and so on), bolster opportunism and seek to "engage the masses" on the politically hot but adventitious topic of the day. Thus: they tend to act in an unprincipled manner through ignoring the *raison d'être* of Marxism: i.e. providing the analytic tools to locate capital's fragility, and especially its weakest link – and then use these insights to keep hammering away at this particular weakness as a priority. A philosophy of revolution – which, for me, is what using Marxism as I have used it amounts to – informs strategy, and this infuses modes of activism and action. The *absolute negativity* that this process entails informs organisational forms and action, with the dialectic of organisation and philosophy always kept in view, for:

> Today's objective-subjective situation provides ample proof of how the effort to work out a new beginning cannot be realized when the concretisation of the philosophy of revolution is skipped over (News & Letters, 2006, p.8).

Of course, some critics at this point are likely to come over all indignant and point to Lebanon, Iraq and so on and accuse me of ignoring these events as instances on which anti-capitalist politics can be built. However, my point above is that the politics of human resistance is the main *priority*, not that all other issues are systematically ignored. There is a strategic point to anti-capitalist activity, and we should not just be blown about by the winds of events – a fear of Harold Macmillan's, apparently, when he was UK Prime Minister. Furthermore, other issues are significant in terms of how they relate to the politics of human resistance: the links need to be made, in all senses.

Secondly, the politics of human resistance is not only concerned with opposing the reduction of education and training to labour power but also holds out for modes of education and training aimed

at meeting human needs and opening up realms of freedom (see Rikowski, 2004a). At this point, the politics of human resistance also needs to intersect with a more generalised anti-capitalist education otherwise it embraces only one dimension of the negativity required for progressive social change: i.e. resistance to the reduction of education and training to labour power production – without offering alternative forms of education and training.

Thirdly, a politics of human resistance has a truly pedagogic aspect: it must incorporate a critical pedagogy, or what Peter McLaren (in Pozo and McLaren, 2006, p.19) calls 'revolutionary critical pedagogy' – given that mainstream critical pedagogy is often quite tame and domesticated in terms of its orientation. Thus, education as labour power production for capitalist work should be challenged in classrooms and staffrooms – a tough call today as vocationalist consciousness seems to have become more entrenched. However, one of the problems with this is that in any society, including the society of the future, labour power will and must exist. Therefore, it would be unwise to attack the very existence of labour power, as a few on the Left have done. Education and trained labour power will be essential, always. Rather the *social form* that it takes must be challenged – in particular, in contemporary capitalist society, the reduction of labour power to human capital: the social form that labour power assumes in currently constituted society (see Rikowski, 1999).

Conclusion: Critical Pedagogy Plus

> A true renewal of thinking about educational and social reform must pass through a regeneration of Marxist theory if the great and fertile meaning of human rights and equality is to reverberate in the hopes of aggrieved populations throughout the world. Education in its current incarnation is bound up with the fate of corporate-led global capitalism and its unbridled capacity for accumulation (Peter McLaren, *An Address to La Fundación McLaren de Pedagogía Crítica*, Tijuana, Mexico, 31st July, 2004).

For education, a politics of human resistance should ideally be accompanied by a politics of anti-capitalisation. This distinction rests on Marx's insight noted earlier regarding the two great classes of commodities. The politics of human resistance rests on labour power, the unique, special 'class of one'. Yet schools in England are gradually being *capitalised*; they are being crafted by New Labour's education policies into areas of commodity production, value creation and profit. This is what I have called the business takeover of schools (Rikowski, 2005), and the commodities developed through these processes belong to Marx's 'general class' of commodities.

The capitalisation of schools has spawned a significant politics: the politics of anti-capitalisation does exist to some extent, from pressure groups like the Campaign for State Education (CASE), to the National Union of Teachers (NUT) policies and resolutions on school privatisation, to campaigns against Academies and their business sponsors. The politics of human resistance, on the other hand, is very under-developed, almost to the point of non-existence. Some campaigning was done around youth labour and training schemes for unemployed youth such as the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) in the early 1980s, and on its predecessor, the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) by groups such as YOB. There was also some work and campaigning done by labour activists at the Coventry Workshop and the trade unionists working on youth issues in Birmingham in the 1980s. Today, a politics of human resistance has a shadowy existence, and I shall discuss the reasons for this in future work.

For now, one place to start to generate a politics of human resistance is at the chalk face (or PowerPoint slide) itself; in the classroom. Recent work by Peter McLaren is inspirational in this respect (see McLaren 2005 and 2006). From what I have said, and from McLaren's work, a classroom or lecture/seminar room politics of human resistance will never be adequate on its own. It is a much broader conception, as I have indicated. Furthermore, mainstream Left parties, groups and sects are unlikely to take on this politics. Using Marxist analysis and critique to reach strategic conclusions regarding what should be done, based on locating the weak points in the rule of capital, is not very well entrenched in the Left in the UK. If labour power is capital's weakest link, then anti-capitalists should hammer away at the social processes that play the leading roles in the social production of labour power in contemporary society: education and training. The link must be broken to the benefit of human and individual progress and well-being and new forms of labour power and humanity forged in the process.

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The Age of the Corporate State *Versus* The Informational and Cognitive Public Domain

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Abstract

This article analyses concepts of the bourgeois State, capitalist corporations and the democratic public domain. The main thesis presented is that today nation states have fused deeply with corporations; both orders have become transformed into one indivisible entity. The article considers how, in the Corporate State, society arrives at a dangerous condition; if the alternative forces to capitalism-imperialism are not able to oppose (under the rule of law) or dismantle its prime agent (the corporation/capitalistic companies), then humankind is in danger of having its democratic order hollowed-out or destroyed completely by the corporate State. Throughout the article, there is evidence of how the corporate State has corroded part of the public domain in the library sector by means of capitalistic commoditisation and privatisation of its services. Evidence exposes the corporation's lack of ethics or morality. Finally, it is advocated that citizens re-establish the public domain and to force corporations under the rule of law to be judged by enforced legal accountability in a manner comparable to the relationship between the law and the public citizen.

Keywords: Informational and cognitive capitalism, public domain, public interest, public sphere, citizens, cultural political economy, libraries, repositories of public knowledge.

1.   Introduction

This paper is a philosophical discussion on the constant attacks from the corporate State against the public domain: specifically against attacks on access to culture, information and knowledge through libraries and other repositories of public knowledge. Thus, the analysis focuses on the political economy and cultural aspects of the public domain. From the pertinent literature, the works of Herbert H. Schiller are the most significant. He foresaw at the end of his

career that the state "as cultural production, in its basic forms and relations, becomes increasingly indistinguishable from production in general, a political economy of culture – a rigorous examination of its production and its consumption – becomes more an obligatory and vital site for research and analysis" (Schiller, 2000, p.62). He also emphasizes that:

> To ignore or minimize the value of this field of inquiry is to relinquish understanding of, and therefore the capability for resistance to, the latest crucially important terrain of capitalism. The political economy of cultural production and consumption is a core element in a twenty-first century understanding of capitalism (Ibid.).

This article concurs with the aforementioned perspective, and expands upon research and analysis of the political economy of culture in the current stage of capitalist development; i.e. the political economy of the so-called informational or cognitive stage of capitalism.

It focuses on some of the most corrosive effects of capitalism in its phase of "market imperialism" as termed by Marquand (2004, p.136), effects which are affecting adversely the public domain. The political economy of culture is a very broad subject area, as is the public domain. Hence, this article analyses the role that the State plays in contemporary capitalist society: in particular, demonstrating the transformation of the State into a corporate State. From here, it is demonstrated how the corporate State is the main cause for the hollowing out of the public domain in general, and of the informational and cognitive public domain (within which libraries are an element) in particular.

Along the same lines, the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Zizek (2000) alerts us about the importance of the politicisation of the economy due to recent developments aimed at the monopolistic concentration within and between media, communication, and information and knowledge sectors:

> A further indicator of the necessity for some kind of politicization of the economy is the overtly 'irrational' prospect of concentrating quasi-monopolistic power in the hands of a single individual or corporation, like Rupert Murdoch or Bill Gates. If the next decade brings the unification of the multitude of communicative media in a single apparatus reuniting the features of interactive computer, TV, video – and audio-- phone, video and CD player, and if Microsoft actually succeeds in becoming the quasi-monopolistic owner of this new universal medium controlling not only the language used in it but also the conditions of its application, then we obviously approach the absurd situation in which a single agent, exempt from public control, will in effect dominate the basic communicational structure of our lives and will thus, in a way, be stronger than any government (Zizek, 2000, p.356).

Thus, the three elements guiding this analysis are:

1) The capitalistic corporation on the economic front, and

2) The State within the political dimension, and

3) The informational and cognitive public domain on the cultural terrain

Therefore, the central part of the public domain analysed here is the informational-cognitive impact on the function of libraries, and, by extension, on other repositories of public knowledge. Furthermore, since the concepts of "information" and "knowledge" affect all human relationships these will be analysed based on evidence found in the literature from some of the varied forms of production, distribution and storage, or use of either information or knowledge. These phenomena are analysed from a variety of angles in this article: such as ethical, educational, social, and political and other perspectives. Thus, the article aims to invite the public and the community of librarians and cultural workers involved in repositories of public knowledge in particular, to reflect and debate on the tenacious and persistent attacks of capitalist States and corporations on the public domain and its institutions. At the same time, this article invites readers to counter-attack the trend of destruction by market imperialism, with its neo-liberal policies commanded by the corporate States against the public domain. Marquand (2004, p.134) alerts us to these issues. A key aim of this article is to stimulate debate on these significant contemporary issues. In addition, we need to explore how to re-establish the increasingly undermined public service ethos in libraries set within a public service context that is increasingly at risk from corporations and the capitalist State. Thus, a case is set out for information and knowledge that is available, accessible, and usable in a corporation-free zone. Furthermore, these vital services should be free of charge, provided on an egalitarian and equitable basis to users and potential users, and seek to be relevant for community needs, thereby nurturing democracy and the democratisation of knowledge and information.

2.   The Advent of the Corporate State *Versus* the Informational and Cognitive Public Domain

What is the State? The fundamental feature of the State is to maintain a society divided into classes. The dominant class exerts political power and defines (by legal and extra-legal means) its right

to expropriate the socially generated wealth and to exploit and subdue the dispossessed classes under its domination. Nevertheless, the dominative elite ruling the State – and its various apparatuses such as the government to manage social affairs – need resources from the dominated classes, under the pretext of the *status quo*; the rulers and governed keep a *sine qua non* relationship. Engels defines the State in this way:

> Only one thing was wanting: an institution which not only secured the newly acquired riches of individuals against the communistic traditions of the gentile order, which not only sanctified the private property formerly so little valued, and declared this sanctification to be the highest purpose of all human society; but an institution which set the seal of general social recognition on each new method of acquiring property and thus amassing wealth at continually increasing speed; an institution which perpetuated, not only this growing cleavage of society into classes, but also the right of the possessing class to exploit the non-possessing, and the rule of the former over the latter. And this institution came. The State was invented (Engels, 1884).

Although this is the essential nature of the State, in this analysis some functions of the republican democratic State relate to the provision of social services. For the public, these services have traditionally been free of charge, democratically organised and users (in theory) are socially equal. These services are necessities in terms of the functioning of democracy and the concrete manifestation of a whole range of rights that ensures society does not degrade to levels of slavery, barbarism, or savagery. Nevertheless, what is not discussed here is the disappearance or establishment of any other alternative state to the bourgeois Parliamentarian State. That is beyond the aims of this analysis.

However, it is important to emphasise how the class essence of the State influences society in the ways that its rulers in turn provide the aforementioned social services to people. To the extent that the ruling classes of their State ignore their minimum mandate of providing people with such services in the way considered here, then to that extent (quantitatively and qualitatively) it will hollow-out the democratic principles of the public interest and the public domain. Ideally, the State's activities and practices incorporate the principles of democracy and public interest. To the degree that the State deprives the public from services incorporating these principles, it degrades and alienates the people.

What is the public domain? The concept of the 'public domain' is significantly different from the notion of 'public sector'; the latter is included and subordinate to the public domain:

> In the public domain, citizens collectively define what the public interest is to be, through struggle, argument, debate and negotiation.

> If the rulers of the State and the officials who serve them are not accountable to the citizenry and their representatives, the language of the public interest can become a cloak for private interests (Marquand, 2004, p.33).

However, what is it the corporation? To understand this we need to examine the core characteristics of *contemporary* capitalism. The characteristic features of contemporary capitalism are:

- Privatisations of public services;

- Deregulations where corporations are free from being accountable for their activities by the State power;

- Advocacy for free trade or free exchange, to pay the lowest taxes, etc;

- Free enterprise;

- Incorporated, or limited liability institutions for profit; and

- Entrepreneurship – is that vehicle of embodiment and materiality of the philosophy of the dominant classes of contemporary capitalism-imperialism that precisely and sharply carry out the mandates of its class.

However, for practical purposes it is the *corporation* – in its Anglo-Saxon definition – that is the most representative institution of the current capitalist and imperialist system of exploitation and expropriation of wealth. It feeds on all the above factors. Thus, this is the most adequate definition:

> As the corporation comes to dominate society – through, among other things, privatization and commercialization – its ideal conception of human nature inevitably becomes dominant too. And that is the frightening prospect. The corporation, after all, is deliberately designed to be psychopath: purely self-interested, incapable of concern for others, amoral, and without conscience – in a word, inhuman (Bakan, 2004, p.134).

Bakan indicates that the features that are common to all corporations are their:

> ...obsession with profits and share prices, greed, lack of concern for others, and a merchant for breaking legal rules. These traits are, in turn, rooted in an institutional culture, the corporation's, that valorises self-interest and invalidates moral concern (2004, p.58).

He also highlights the view that all corporations are even prone to their own destruction, like the case of the Enron Corporation. All of

this is an integral part of its institutional character, inherent to its nature, and with psychopath features: "Greed and moral indifference define the corporate world's culture" (2004, p.55).

Based on comprehensive research on the psycho-pathological character of this institution Bakan highlights a list of features that define the essence of corporations as being psychopathic (2004, pp.56-57). For Bakan, the corporations are:

- *Irresponsible.* In an attempt to satisfy the corporate goal, everybody else is at risk; including their own shareholders.
- *Manipulative.* Corporations try to manipulate everything, including public opinion.
- *Grandiose.* Corporations self-claim grandiose visions and goals, always insisting they are the number one in their competition with the rest.
- *Asocial.* Corporations lack empathy and have asocial tendencies. Their behaviour indicates they do not really concern themselves with their victims of competition and greed, or with damages to the public or the environment.
- *Insensible.* Corporations refuse to accept responsibility for their own actions and are unable to feel remorse for their victims.
- *Superficial.* Corporations in order to achieve their bottom line aims of greed, profit, and money are above or against everybody else; corporations relate with the public in nice and superficially appealing ways, but are not be like that in reality.

Bakan also reported in a well-documented way, several serious cases of corporations' negligence, ecocide, and crimes (2004, pp.87-88). Yet there are many well-known cases where dozens, or hundreds, or thousands of humans die in labour accidents or in other circumstances where corporations are involved. There are also cases of ecocides where corporations pay fines but the State does not punish sufficiently those responsible. Discussion of all of these cases goes beyond the limits of this paper. Sufficient to say, the State in contemporary capitalist society indulges corporations' psycho-pathological character. This is crucially important to emphasise since in many disciplines –and particularly in library and information science – the majority of academic communities have adhered to or have been seduced, consciously or unconsciously, by corporations' good-natured and charming discourse. However, such positive discourse is contrary to their true nature: to lie is their essence, to sell is their drive, and to knock down their competition their mission.

Why a corporate State? In some countries, States are implementing legislation regarding free access to information through government

Acts and regulations from government bodies to make them accountable before their citizens. Such Acts try to avoid forms of government corruption: nepotism, favouritism, interest conflicts, and the like (Muela-Meza, 2004a). However, in the majority of Western democratic States owners of corporations' can also be elected or appointed to government positions. Notwithstanding that there are nowadays more anti-corruption locks, the truth is that corporations' owners will not abandon their corporate ideology, and neither are they necessarily forced to dissolve their corporations or cut themselves off from commercial interests they are involved in.

The State, and the public domain, where it is confined have diametrically opposed aims to those of corporations: the public good versus private profit. The overt or covert fusion of the State and corporations represents grave dangers to the democratic State and to the public domain, and the values it enshrines (Marquand, 2004, p.24). On the other hand, "The State power has not been reduced. It has been redistributed, more tightly connected to the needs and interests of corporations and less to the public interest", according to Bakan (2004, p. 154).

Thus, in assessing public policies in general, or those particularly related to libraries and other repositories of public knowledge, at any level of government or at the national or international levels, it can be determined what social classes, sectors, or groups of people are benefiting or being affected. On the analysis of this article, the social class character of this fusion between the State and the entrepreneurial corporation is precisely the character of the dominating classes of capitalism-imperialism with their neo-liberal policies. Yet on the other hand, the dominating classes of capitalism-imperialism are increasingly becoming more political; they close ranks, but they do so precisely to depoliticise the public domain, as noted by Zizek:

> The big news of today's post-political age of the 'end of ideology' is thus the radical depoliticization of the sphere of the economy: the way the economy functions (the need to cut social welfare, etc.) is accepted as a simple insight into the objective state of things. However, as long as this fundamental depoliticization of the economic sphere is accepted, all the talk active citizenship, about public discussion leading to the 'cultural' issues of religious, sexual, ethnic and other way-of-life differences, without actually encroaching upon the level at which long-term decisions that affect us all are made (Zizek, 2000, p.353).

Therefore, to the extent that members of society – including librarians - participate or do not participate in acknowledging and resisting the increasingly psycho-pathological character of public administration through the corporate State, then to that extent

outcomes for good or bad of the public domain in general, or the informational and cognitive public domain of libraries in particular, will be determined.

3.   Information and Knowledge Societies, or Plundering Societies of Nature and the Public Domain?

The self-styled "information societies" or "knowledge societies" are in fact neologisms which hide the ideology of the dominant classes of capitalism in its most violently renovated imperialist phase. They are euphemisms that seek to magic away or cover up the essence of such social phenomenon. On the contrary, here the underlying ideologies of these concepts are analysed, and their bourgeois class nature revealed. Expressions such as "information society" and "knowledge society" are in hock to the corporate State and its obfuscating and condescending ideologues, or followers, or apologists, or logographers who echo them.

From the scarce critical and analytical literature reviewed, emerged the remarkable work of the Mexican poet, essayist, editor, and critic Juan Domingo Argüelles, from his book *¿Que leen los que no leen? El poder inmaterial de la literatura, la tradición literaria y el hábito de leer (What do They Read those Who don't Read? The Immaterial Power of Literature, Literary Tradition, and the Habit of Reading).* Following his analysis from the perspective that reading should be done freely and for pleasure, he accomplished a substantial hermeneutic analysis of some critiques of the so called "information society". He highlights the works of the French sociologist Dominique Wolton: *Internet, ¿y después? Una teoría crítica de los nuevos medios de comunicación (Internet, and after? A Critical Theory of the New Mass Media)* y *Sobrevivir a inernet. Conversaciones con Olivier Jay (To Survive Internet: Conversations with Olivier Jay).* Argüelles considers Wolton's works to be some of the few critical analyses that escape from praising the ideology of the dominant classes, and the creators and advocates of their masterpiece: "the information society". Thus, he states that:

> For the market ideology, the over abundance ... is in itself, the democratization of its access, which of course is false: who buys is who can afford to buy ... Within the same perspective, over-information is not in itself a benefit; we can be over-informed and lack the capacity to understand, value, discern such an informative accumulation. ... The critical function is more important than the capacity of access (Argüelles, 2003, p.165).

The ideologues of the dominant classes of the corporate State are a volcano in constant eruption: like red-hot lava, they must cover

everything as they advance. So currently, they now are talking of the disappearance of the World Wide Web. To replace it, new neologisms have up-surged: World Wide Grid, Omninet, Hypergrid, Oxygen, etc. All of them driven by the needs of corporations, and substantially financed by the public domain purse via universities, such as the MIT case. Their aim is the development of technological megalomanias, where computing capabilities, through electronic networks of bits or quobits, permeate all human life almost as to its totality as with oxygen (Von Baeyer, 2003, p.6). In their dreams and in reality they seek to control it, dominate it, subdue it, exploit it, oppress it, etc. In fact, the ideologies and apologists of the fallacies of the "societies of information and knowledge", as they lack any self-reflective critical analysis are bereft of modesty. The triumphalist megalomania of the cognitive capitalism (Dyer-Witheford, 2005) blurs their sight. From the physics field, Hans von Baeyer, in one of his few glimpses to theorize with a social consciousness, demystifies the happiness-giving character of the information and communication technologies. At the same time, he situates them in a dimension more akin to the reality of the conditions of life of the human beings and their environment:

> We are still learning that the impact of the age of information is not universal as it seems. For us in the developed West, information technologies appear to dominate life, but for the majority of the global population they are vastly irrelevant. The World Wide Web will not solve the problems of poverty when half of the people in the world don't have the means to make or receive a telephone call. Self-driven cars will not improve the living standards of three billions of people who survive with less than 2 dollars a day. Robotic surgery will not cure more than a million and a half who don't have access to drinkable water. Eventually, an appreciation of the treacherous depth and width of the digital divide may begin to suffocate our limitless appetite for information (Von Baeyer, 2003, pp.6-7).

So, what kinds of ages or societies are we talking about? Von Baeyer also shows strong evidence regarding the dangerous physical limits involved in the production of all the material bodies, which combined make possible the computation and transmission of information. He also evidences its hidden costs (or those that the happiness-giving ideologies hide) in the production of such bodies. For example, to produce a simple computer chip of 2 grams requires using materials 36 times its weight in chemicals, 800 times its weight in energy – mainly electric that originates principally from fossil fuels – and 1,600 times its weight in water. At the same time he notes that the champions of the "information society" skate on thin conceptual ice, since the concept of "information," at least within physics, has not yet been defined adequately. He also criticises Shannon's theories that until today information technology lacks one of the main element critical for humans: information

technology is unable to compute *meanings*. Therefore, a great proportion of information found on the Internet (if in fact it is locatable) has a meaning deficit. Furthermore, Internet sources are either badly organised, or the information is simply wrong, whilst so much of it is neither accessible nor useful (Von Baeyer, 2003, p.7). However, Von Baeyer's analysis, according to the position sustained throughout this paper, presents some weaknesses. When he tries hard to reach for a conceptualisation of "information" as the new language that permeates all sciences, he does not criticise the negative effects of the commercialisation of information for the public domain or for the environment. For example, he argues that information be measured in the same fashion as "energy" is measured in order to become a commodity and be commercialised (Von Baeyer, 2003, p.11).

At the heart of the debate, concerning the plundering of information and knowledge by corporations supported by corporate States is that their ideologues hide the crucial antagonisms. Principally, those between the nature of information and knowledge that cannot be owned by anyone on the one hand, and the roles for expropriating, usurping, and plundering information and knowledge by the dominating classes of capitalism-imperialism through the corporate State and their *ad hoc* national and international organisations, on the other. These ideologues also cloak the activities of those charged with subduing all human beings of the planet to their legislative Bills, by making everyone criminal and punishable for producing, reproducing, storing, and sharing information and knowledge that formerly existed free of human domination. To fill such a vacuum, Zizek poses this question to these ideologues of 'information':

> Do not the two phenomena we have mentioned (the unpredictable global consequences of decisions made by private companies; the patent absurdity of 'owning' a person's genome or the media individuals use for communication), to which one should add at least the antagonism contained in the notion of owning (scientific) *knowledge* (since knowledge is by nature neutral to its propagation, that is, it is not worn out by its spread and universal use), explain why today's capitalism must resort to more and more absurd strategies to *sustain the economy of scarcity in the sphere of information,* and thus to contain within the frame of private property and market relations the demon it has unleashed (say, by inventing ever new modes of *preventing* the free copying of digital information? (Zizek, 2000, p.357).

Such questioning shows evidence of the irrational and contradictory nature of capitalistic production. On one hand, the owners of capital frantically produce –through the economic exploitation of the working class, the ones who actually produce are the workers – products or commodities, only to obtain personal benefits or

benefits for the owners and shareholders of their corporations. But when society uses such products and commodities *directly*, thus stopping capitalist directors in the process from extracting any profits out of that production, then the role of those capitalists' *alter ego*, the corporate State, is poised to attack in order to try to expropriate such human beings' sensory capabilities, depriving them from accessing such information and knowledge by means of their subduing processes of keeping an elitist, selective, and excluding use to those who cannot afford to buy the private symbol of its access. Such expropriation goes along the lines with keeping intact the vertebral column of its nature: copyright laws, patents, and so on.

The industrial, commercial or financing corporations of information and knowledge – which also possess psycho-pathological characters like all kinds of corporations – have the over-arching goal to achieve the bottom-line goals of their owners and associates, regardless of the social good or ecological considerations. As it has been discussed before, the corporate State is only good for preserving the private property of corporations, including that of the plundering of information and knowledge. But citizenship within the public domain mainly looks after the common good of all the public, and the balance between the public and the environment, through politics. Thus, the organizations and institutions which overtly or covertly seek for the private appropriation of the public, or the co-existence between privateers and the public, show evidence of their class character against the public domain and its democratic principles.

4.   Information and Knowledge for What?

Regardless of the purposes of information and knowledge, the conception we have about them depends on our world-view, our cosmogony, and finally our social class position:

> Knowledge is mediated by the individuals who produce it, therefore, there is no neutrality, neither in the way to know, nor in the knowledge being produced…This knowledge is partial since it comes from particular positions and articulations, and in constant transformation. From the different positions of an individual, different realities can be seen (Montenegro Martínez, 2001, p.271 and p.279).

4.1 — *Information and knowledge for the welfare of all or only for a few elites?*

There are many possible answers to this question. Einstein (1949) argued that in the capitalist system of production, given its internal logic, social information and knowledge for the development of technologies, systems, products, commodities, etc. were arranged with the unique purpose of the dominating capitalist class, the owners of capital (and their corporations) and their State representatives to maintain their political power and control over workers. As can be read below, information and knowledge for workers only meant as much information and knowledge as were applied in production. In turn, this only meant more unemployment for many, more curtailing of their freedom, and in general more alienation:

> Production is carried on for profit, not for use. There is no provision that all those able and willing to work will always be in a position to find employment; an "army of unemployed" almost always exists. The worker is constantly in fear of losing his job. Since unemployed and poorly paid workers do not provide a profitable market, the production of consumers' goods is restricted, and great hardship is the consequence. Technological progress frequently results in more unemployment rather than in an easing of the burden of work for all. The profit motive, in conjunction with competition among capitalists, is responsible for an instability in the accumulation and utilization of capital which leads to increasingly severe depressions. Unlimited competition leads to a huge waste of labour, and to that crippling of the social consciousness of individuals which I mentioned before. This crippling of individuals I consider the worst evil of capitalism (Einstein, 1949, pp.15-16).

Thus, apologists of the "information and knowledge societies" stand side-by-side with the dominant capitalistic class for the fattening-up of the loins they would ride. In other words, all of them argue precisely for the sophistication of control technologies and mechanisms created with intent for the domination, subduing, and alienation of the producers of information-knowledge.

Traditionally universities were the major centres for the transformation of information and knowledge, incorporating social obligation and ethical perspectives set to solve the problems of our world and its species, including ours. But along with the advent of the *Universities, Inc. & Ltd.*, and the alliances between the corporate State and universities, contradictions between the academy as pursuing knowledge-for-its own sake and knowledge for capital become more evident. The borderline between corporations and the State is blurred. The State has compromised its autonomy regarding the universities by yielding to the interests of its corporate patronages, and shaken by corporate assaults to its

intellectual integrity. Universities Inc. & Ltd. undertake research based on the agendas of corporate businesspeople, aided and abetted by the State. Corporate sponsors of research try, contrary to their cynically expressed pretensions regarding respect for democratic rights and freedom of expression, to censor their research publications for public consumption (Dyer-Witheford, 2005).

However, not all researchers have been subdued to this post-modern oppressive inquisitional machine of the corporate State. Such is the case of the scientist Ignacio Chapela, who was working at the University of California, Berkeley, which is associated with Monsanto and Syngenta (Novartis) corporations. He discovered that the technologies for Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) have represented grave dangers for the maize farming in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico (Quist and Chapela, 2001). Given this scientific research, as published in *Nature*, the Mexican government has stopped the implementation of such GMOs in national lands and waters. It is also exploring possibilities for issuing Bills and regulations that prohibit definitively such applications. Chapela is openly alerting the scientific community and the Mexican government not to allow passing any Bill on GMOs, since the masterminds of such a Bill are precisely the corporations associated with UC Berkeley: Monsanto and Syngenta, besides Dupont and the Mexican Seminis/Savia! In addition, these companies will be the only beneficiaries by selling GMO technologies to the businesspeople from within and outside the Mexican government (Chapela, 2004).

On the analysis here, corporations only care about getting their bottom line goals: profits and greed maximisation. They do not care, like in this case, if due to the application of GMOS to maize – basic food for the Mexican and Latin American diet – people's health will sustain irreversible damaged, or if all the lands and waters from Oaxaca, Mexico wide, or the whole world would result in being damaged as well. In response to Chapela's scientific discoveries, the University of California Berkeley sacked him from his post in December 2004 without any reasonable explanation. He believes that Monsanto and Syngenta are the masterminds behind UC Berkeley's drastic decision (*Science in Society*, 2004). The list of these kinds of post-modern oppressive inquisitions is long; consider, for example, the monstrous ways in which the tobacco company operates, and so on.

4.2 – *Information and knowledge for the welfare of humans and the ecological balance or for the destruction of humans and the environment?*

The ethical foundation of scientific research needs to be reaffirmed by the international labour community. It is not ethical that, in the name of scientific research, weapons for the destruction of the species are constructed. The dominant social classes back the construction of these weapons. Practically, they invest in individuals holding power in States, governments and corporations who lack any moral fibre to this end, whilst indulging in covering discourse that manifests hypocrisy appropriate for social psychopaths. It suffices to watch, listen to, or read in any medium of communication of the criminally deadly use of information and knowledge – the general intellect – crystallised in all sorts of armaments employed, by means of any propagandistic sophisms, to murder other human beings, or to destroy our human civilization, or vast areas of our planet. An Australian critic, Brian Martin, in his book *Information Liberation: Challenging the Corruptions of Information Power,* elaborates on this issue, thus:

> Military research is a big proportion. Here the aim is to develop more powerful weapons, more precise guidance systems, more penetrating methods of surveillance, and more astute ways of moulding soldiers to be effective fighters. For the researchers, the tasks can be very specific, such as designing a bullet that is more lethal – or sometimes less lethal, for crowd control purposes. Many talented scientists have devoted their best efforts to making weaponry more deadly. In most government and corporate labs, practical relevance to the goals of the organisation is highly important. In these labs, the direct influence of groups with different agendas is minimal. … Overall, university research is less targeted to specific outcomes than most government and corporate research. This is especially true of fields like philosophy and mathematics (Martin, 1998, p.126).

Martin (1998, p.129) also indicates – see the following table – in the Australian context, how some disciplines or interdisciplinary fields within the humanities or the social sciences get little funding from governments or universities, whereas applied sciences, managerial and military disciplines obtain plenty of funding:

Funding / Discipline Type	Plenty of funding	Little funding
Disciplines	chemical engineering, computer science, accountancy, law	philosophy, history, creative writing
Interdisciplinary fields	policy making, military planning, corporate strategies	peace studies, women's studies, political economy

On the same lines, Jennifer Washburn, author of the book
University, Inc: the Corporate Corruption of Higher Education
(Washburn, 2005), argues that the corporations are taking over
universities to such an extent that universities' commitment to
ethical behaviour is questionable. She, in accord with Martin (1998),
notes emphatically that the consequences of blurring limits between
the academic and corporate scenarios are very serious. She
deplores that these corporate-driven universities are pushing out
the search for theoretical knowledge and curiosity-driven 'blue sky'
enquiry, to give way, instead, to commercial research. Washburn
also deplores the situation where some disciplines that make
money, study money, or that bring money are showered with
resources and laboratory spaces, yet "physics, philosophy, and
other fields that have trouble supporting themselves are left to
scrape by" (Washburn, 2005, p.19). She also denounces examples
of how some scientists have abandoned academic ethics to adopt
the anti-social, anti-ethics of corporations. Such is the case of some
researchers from the University of Utah. These researchers
discovered a gene responsible for inherited breast cancer in 1994.
Yet instead of making public their research – financed by the public
purse with 4.6 million US taxpayers' dollars – the university
patented the gene and granted monopolistic rights over it to Myriad
Genetics Corporation, whose owner was at the same time a
University of Utah professor (Washburn, 2005, p.19). Washburn
also puts forward a proposition that aims to distinguish or separate
the academic sphere from the corporative one:

> There's an obvious solution: apply conflict-of-interest rules to all
> publicly funded scientists. If we want to rein in the commercialism that
> is destroying our public research institutions, they must all be held to
> the same high standards (2005, p.19).

In the UK and Australia, some authors (Slee and Ball, 1999,
pp.290-291) claim "the aim of research is to produce new
knowledge essential for the growing and competitiveness of the
nation". On the other hand, supporters of paradigms for research
with critical, exploratory, and creative foci must wage strong
struggles to open up critical space in order and to express their
ideas to a wider public. The narrowing of research along corporate
goals is termed as "academic capitalism" by Slee and Ball (1999).
This type of research is simply an economic instrument, where the
researcher is exhorted to become an "entrepreneur", to forge
alliances with industry and to create research agendas that can be
demonstrated to be economically productive.

In Mexico, there exist many cases where Universities Inc. & Ltd
form close association with the Corporate State Inc. & Ltd, *a*nd their
corresponding branch governments. The most relevant cases are to

be found in the state of Nuevo Leon (state as a political entity not as the State as country), where paradoxically the people of the government of Nuevo Leon has passed a Bill promoting knowledge. They also project the city of Monterrey, Nuevo Leon as the International City of Knowledge. However, at the same time, they have dismantled undergraduate courses in philosophy, sociology and history, and have changed the name to the one of librarianship courses (Carrizales, 2005; Galán, 2005). Furthermore, the Federal government of the Mexican State (as a national State) through the Ministry of Labour and Social Planning has begun an official crusade to dismantle courses such as philosophy, sociology, and political sciences from all the country's universities (Martínez, 2004).

The bourgeois State *per se* is a giant power that the public cannot control, even when laws exist for that very purpose. The capitalistic corporation is another giant power, essentially out of the public's control. As it has been analysed here, with the fusion of the bourgeois State and the capitalistic corporation, the latter becomes the ideologue of all public policy. This fusion already poses most grave dangers against the public domain and nature, as examples in this article have demonstrated. Furthermore, there exists another major power. The scientific and technological knowledge in itself is a major power for their cognoscenti to explore, exploit, dominate, and control physical and human nature. This totalitarian and anti-democratic fusion of these three powers into a single one is the perfect formula for the advent of a corrupted, neo-absolutist, and monopolistic power that operates on human, physical and cosmic scales. Never before in history has there existed a power as deadly and destructive as this. At the same time, never before it has been urgent for the political participation of the citizenry in favour of the public domain and the cosmic equilibrium, to dismantle such dangers. These are the grave dangers that the age of the advent of the corporate State against the informational and cognitive public domain generates and nurtures. These forces are against terrestrial and cosmic equilibrium. These are the same dangers that the philistine and fallacious apologists of the "societies of information and knowledge" – among them many librarians – seem incapable of stating, debating or contesting.

5.   The Corporate State as a Barrier against the Access of Information and Knowledge in Libraries and other Repositories of Public Knowledge

Never since the advent of the Gutenberg printing mechanism has there been manifested more clearly the blockade of access to

information and knowledge as in our current epoch. Nowadays, the enemies of the public domain have tried to sell us the idea that the electronic networks of information and knowledge would reach all human beings of the planet nearly to the speed of light, and other similar marvels. The reality of things is the opposite, because precisely nowadays is when the production of information has increased to an *EXA* exponential, but at the same time the vast majority of people throughout the planet do not have access to it. Before computer networks, or the Internet, this could possibly be justified due to the incapability of the technologies of communication, information, transport, and other modes of communication to make possible such access. Today, it is unjustifiable. The main cause, on the analysis of this article, lies in the corporate nature of the State into which almost all the nations of the world have transformed.

That is, the corporations moved by their self-interest and greed, only search for profit; money from those who can buy their legal or illegal commodities. Once corporations have penetrated, permeated, and led the interests of the State, then automatically the major goals of the pre-existing State are hollowed-out: in particular, those goals involved in serving and servicing the public good above private interests. In this process, public goods transmute into private ones, a kind of reverse alchemy: they become qualitatively different. Schiller elaborates on this:

> The changeover now occurring in libraries is not simple a matter of introducing superior techniques and instrumentation which permit all participants in the information arena – providers, users, and the general public – to benefit. Along with the new electronic technologies come a set of arrangements – social relations if you will. These, as they developed in recent years under the pressure of private interest and deliberate conservative budget-cutting policy, introduce the mechanics of the market to what had been a public sphere of social-knowledge activity (Schiller, 1989, p.81).

Thus, members of the library community from all over the world are following this destructive amalgam of the corporate plus State power against the public domain. In this dangerous ideology of the State with its corporate and entrepreneurial essence, the public services in the public domain, such as the free, free of charge, unhampered, egalitarian and democratic access to and use of information and knowledge inside or through libraries and other repositories of public knowledge, do not matter any more. They do not matter any more for all the inhabitants of the world; only for those who can pay for them. Some U.S. critics, from the very few who have managed to escape from the propagandistic machine of the Corporate State Inc. & Ltd., argue that:

> Transforming information into a saleable good, available only to those with the ability to pay for it, changes the goal of information access from an egalitarian to a privileged condition. The consequence of this is that the essential underpinning of a democratic order is seriously damaged. This is the ultimate outcome of commercialization information throughout the social sphere (Schiller and Schiller, 1988, p.154).

In the UK, Webster adds to this critique:

> Fundamental principles, most importantly free access and comprehensive service, are under challenge, threatened by a new definition of information as something to be made available only on market terms. As this conception increases its influence, so may we expect to see the further decline of the public service ethos operating in libraries (users will increasingly be regarded as customers who are to pay their way) and with this its public sphere functions of provision of the full range of informational needs without individual cost (Webster, 2002, p.182).

Also in the UK, Ruth Rikowski (2002) shows evidence on how libraries are already being controlled by capital's global agenda through international mechanisms such as WTO (World Trade Organization) and its GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) and TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Services) Agreements. These mechanisms are internationally legal extensions of corporations: operating primarily to boost profits and sale of information and services. This pernicious trend is hollowing-out the traditional library ethos of providing services to users free, and free of charge.

In another research paper, Muela-Meza (2004b) has criticised diverse challenges that libraries and other repositories of public knowledge face before the ceaseless attacks from the plundering and usurping societies of public information and knowledge; the self-called "societies of information and knowledge". The most remarkable challenge in that study is precisely the economic one: the psycho-pathological fact that libraries seek to charge for access to information and knowledge.

The corrosive effects of the aggressive corporate takeover of libraries and other repositories of public knowledge are clear. In Europe, all the members States of the European Union must subscribe to the 1992 EU/Directive where all library users must pay 1.00 € Euro per each book borrowed to be read at home. In Spain, librarians are fighting and resisting such regressive taxation, because if they surrender their struggle and end up accepting it, that will precisely deprive users from accessing information and knowledge in their libraries (Martín, 2005, p.6). Furthermore, as Calvo (2005) argues, by the simple fact that libraries stock authors'

works in the stacks, and librarians promote them, this means that they may even end up owing royalties to libraries, librarians and users:

> I am going to take this absurd case further: If it is considered normal that libraries pay royalties to authors, then someone should pay royalties to the librarians who manage to lend many books of a given author, and someone should also pay royalties to the users who borrow many books to their homes, and so they generate incomes for the librarians who lend much and for the authors... If that absurd world becomes a reality, do not doubt that it will be a world without library services. Libraries will disappear, they will lag behind for a second time in our history in the terrain of dreams (Calvo, 2005).

6.   Conclusions

Regarding the public domain in general, the major danger is precisely the hollowing-out and corrosion of democratic values:

> Democracy, on the other hand, is necessarily hierarchical. It requires that people, through the governments they elect, have sovereignty over corporations, not equality with them; that they have authority to decide what corporations can, cannot, and must do. If corporations and governments are indeed partners, we should be worried about the state of our democracy, for it means that government has effectively abdicated its sovereignty over the corporation (Bakan, 2004, p.108).

To give an example on this: in the Mexican scenario, it is evident in the worrisome links between the Nuevo Leon state government and the corporations in the recent Act for the Promotion of Development Based on Knowledge which was passed by the majority of legislators of the ruling party in the state government (PRI, Revolutionary Institutional Party). This law bolsters the manifest link between the Nuevo Leon State Government and the corporate-entrepreneurial sector:

> To implement mechanisms and instruments to link actions that in the topics of science and technology carried out by the state Government, the corporate sector, the social sector, and the education institutions and research community, that facilitates the promotion, dissemination and application of scientific and technological knowledge (Poder Ejecutivo del Estado de Nuevo León, 2004, pp.1-2).

And this is so because as it has been argued above, "corporations are not democratic institutions – their directors and managers owe no accountability to anyone but the shareholders that employ them" (Bakan, 2004, p.151). Thus, owners, shareholders, directors and executives of the corporations are not accountable under the rule of law in case their companies are responsible for crimes against people or ecocides, precisely because the laws from all the capitalist

governments protect corporations. Bakan (2004, p.17) argues that in the first decade of the twentieth century in the USA it was very common for popular discontent and organised dissent (especially from growing labour movement) to move against the dangers corporations represented in terms of their undermining of social institutions. It is thanks to these struggles that social movements achieved government regulation for corporations, and saved vital social institutions from abolition.

On the other hand, for Marquand, the public domain must be reinvented:

> Two lessons emerge from the history of the last thirty years. The first is that the public domain cannot be reinvented without halting and then undoing the neo-liberal revolution. The second is that it is equally necessary to make sure that the failings that undermined it in the second half of the twentieth century, and gave the neo-liberals their opportunity, do not reappear (Marquand, 2004, p.138).

These are the general strategies required to stop the dismantling of public services and to halt the "neo-liberal revolution". Societies must search for mechanisms that allow citizens to begin the process of holding accountable (under the rule of law) the owners, presidents, CEOs, or shareholders of all the corporations (or capitalist companies of any sort). In the same way, citizens hold accountable all elected members of the State or local governments. Thus, citizens could bring any entrepreneur to book under the rule of law, on a personal one-to-one basis, to respond to any wrongdoings against human life, all species and the environment. These corporate folk receive no different treatment from any other common individual citizen.

This process should begin by repealing the *impersonal* character of social institutions. Additionally, these institutions should be subdued to the opening of the access to the information of their assets. And in the same ways that States and governments around the world are being forced by the struggles and claims of citizens to free access to public information, corporations should also be forced to open up, make 'transparent' and enable access to all of their information to the public. This process should begin with opening up all of their scientific research projects. Citizens should force them to do so with the same innovation, quality, efficacy, efficiency, and all the terminology of the jargon of 'market imperialism' that corporations invented and employ. Their own discourse is utilised to undermine them. A more extensive list can be made of the major struggle strategies for the re-vindication of the public domain, but this could be a good start.

On the other hand, regarding concretely the informational and cognitive public domain, this strategy parallels other progressive anti-corporation strategies analysed throughout this paper. In particular, the strategies of separating the corporation from the public domain, and also from State power, and to subdue it to public control and accountability, and to do the same to all of its members within its domain, States and governments, means that:

> The public services of libraries, as factors of library policy that converge between the cultural policy and the policy of information, are indispensable elements to achieve the common good. That is one of the highest ideals that should keep on guiding the practice of professionals in public services in general, and the librarianship discipline in particular, as well as the whole of humankind. The common public good regarding libraries, by virtue of its bases of liberty, equality, and justice, and therefore of its democratic foundations, cannot and should not be given up to the private good, under penalty of putting in check the State of democratic right, the social State (Meneses Tello *et al*, 2004).

This is an introduction to the critique of the advent of the Age of the Corporate State. In this far from Golden Age, the Corporate State is antithetical to the informational and cognitive public domain. This is the starting point to fight for the re-establishment of a once democratic public domain and the common good for the benefit of society as a whole and its environment, or, this is the edge to the abyss into which society, destroyed by market capitalism and imperialism and its demolishing machine of the corporate State, falls.

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'Pay as you learn'!
The 'Learning Society' Rhetoric in the EU-Sponsored Research Projects

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Introduction

In the last 7-8 years tens of millions of Euros from EU funding started to flow into the Greek educational system, under the umbrella of the 'Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training' (OPEIVT II). The OPEIVT II is one of the Third Community Support Framework's 24 Operational Programmes in Greece (2000-2006, with the prospect of extension up to 2008), and is co-financed by the 'European Social Fund' (ESF), the 'European Regional Development Fund' (ERDF) and other national resources. The Programme started as OPEIVT I during the implementation of the 'Second Community Support Framework' (1994-1999) and its main aim was the funding of development projects in the least developed –economically and technologically — regions of the European Union.

Through a discourse analysis of the official texts concerning the OPEIVT framework (Commision's Regulations and Directives) and a brief examination of the national progress reports, we will try to highlight certain issues arising within the given context:

- ✓ What is the hidden agenda behind the rhetoric on the 'Learning Society'?
- ✓ Is 'life-long learning' something clearly understood and agreed upon by every stake-holder in educational policy-making?
- ✓ What is the balance between 'supply' and 'demand' of ('life-long') learning opportunities?
- ✓ Who benefit and who do not from the implementation of the 'life-long learning' strategies?

The Official Picture

The total (projected) cost of the OPEIVT II for the examined period was estimated at €2,728.9 millions[1], with 75% of the funding coming from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European

Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and 25% from national resources. From June 2001 onwards, there have been published 236 calls for proposals regarding action plans for educational improvement (curricular change, text-book writing, production of e-material, introduction of new programs of vocational training and/or Higher Education studies, development of infrastructure, in-service training initiatives, etc.).

The main three aims, according to the official statements are:

- *Enhancement of the quality of education*
- *Prevention and remedy of social exclusion*
- *Formation of an integrated European educational area and quality employment*

These aims are further operationalised into specific projects and sub-projects. In accordance with the aforementioned guidelines, the specific measures applied to the Greek Higher Education have been, so far, the following:

- The partial financing of newly established Higher Education departments[2] (in Universities or Higher Technological Institutes) for a period of three years.

- The (partial) financing of enriching Higher Education with new or under-developed areas of studies (e.g. promotion of Gender, or Environmental Studies).

- The (partial) financing of new innovative ways of teaching in already established departments (e.g. the introduction of e-learning methods, or the enrichment of traditional teaching material with electronic resources, multimedia content, on-line feedback).

- The (partial) financing of technical infrastructure for the development of distance learning.

- The (partial) financing of postgraduate programs, in areas high on the agenda of the European Union (Business & Financial Studies, ICT Studies, Gender & Environmental Studies, Total Quality Management, Life-long & Distance Learning, Adult Education, Teacher Initial & In-service Training etc.).

EU Involvement in Education and the 'Knowledge Society'

The Ideological Basis

Under the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty (articles 126 and 127), the European Union (EU) (hitherto European Community) is officially assuming a more active role in educational policy making. At all levels and in every dimension, from primary school curricula to professional accreditation and vocational training structures, and from teachers' training and licensing to mutual recognition of higher degrees (Tsaousis, 1996; Stamelos & Vasilopoulos, 2004), the EU's significance in education policy-making is increasing.

As it is stated in the article 127 of European Community Treaty, '*the [European] Community shall implement a vocational training policy which shall support and supplement the action of the Member States…*' (European Commission, 2003a). This provision should be combined with that in the article 123, where there is a special reference to the creation of the 'European Social Fund' (i.e. the main financial source of the ensuing OPEIVTs), which *'…shall aim to render the employment of workers easier….. and to facilitate their adaptation to industrial changes and to changes in production systems…'*. Thus, it becomes obvious that from 1992 onwards the notions of 'education', 'training' and 'labour-market' have been inextricably linked, since there is not a single action taken at European-Union level that has not, in one way or the other, stressed the economic character of the 'investment in education'.

The Rhetoric of the 'Common European Higher Education Area'

The so-called 'Common European Higher Education Area', the creation of which is one of the main aims of the OPEIVT programs[3], refers to the role of Higher Education in the new century at European and international level. The main framework and aims of this 'Common European Higher Education Area' were laid out in the Sorbonne (1998) and Bologna (1999) Declarations, and in the Prague Summit Conclusions (2001). The aims adopted, in the light of the member states' commitment towards the 'Lisbon Strategy'[4], can be summarized as following:

- *More diversity than hitherto with respect to target groups ….;*
- *Establishment of an across-the-board 'culture of excellence' by concentrating on funding …;*
- *More flexibility and openness to the labour ………….;*

- *Broadening access….. and more mobility…. ;*
- *Facilitation of the recognition of degrees;*
- *Strengthening human resources ……… by promoting …… transparent and competitive procedures;*
- *Creation of a European framework for Higher Education qualifications and a network of quality assurance agencies.* (Summary of Communication from the Commission of 20 April 2005).[5]

The Character of the Changes

As it is evident from the above texts, the main aim is the harmonisation of educational systems with the more general reforming measures promoted by the EU institutions. Beyond, however, the convergence that is reported in the texts and the official statements, two mechanisms appear to constitute the 'compasses' of the real convergence:

- Firstly, the importance given to the planning, the creation and the application of sets of *educational indicators* that should be used in the evaluation of various systems. The tendency that is obvious here—to remember Ball (1998)—is that, independently from the particularities of various systems—the rule according to which all will be judged is the final evaluation of 'products', something that also determines the scope and targets of the corresponding funding of education.

- The second tool of 'convergence' is *the globalisation of methods of management* used in the world of enterprises; that is, the transference of a certain managerial ethos, which corresponds to criteria of efficiency and evaluates system-outputs in terms of 'productivity gains'. The recent legal framework for the evaluation of programs funded by the EU Structural Funds outlines a strict and technocratic corpus of regulations (Regulation 1260/99 of the European Council, which was incorporated into the national legal framework in 2000)[6]. Great attention is given to the drawing of a realistic 'budget' for every project; that is, a budget that minutely describes where every single cent is going to. In other words, given the fact that the institutions involved are public, non-for-profit establishments, we are witnessing an increasing pressure for the introduction of criteria of 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' into the public educational sphere, something that seemed unthinkable a few years ago.

The Rhetoric of the 'Knowledge Society'

The whole OPEIVT II value-framework is, among other things, a 'shrine' to post-modernism and the notion of 'knowledge' is used

and analysed exclusively through that theoretical and methodological standpoint.

According to post-modernists, the scientific rule '*as long as I can produce proof it is permissible to think that reality is the way I say it is*', is being currently challenged by the rule '*(valuable) knowledge must be considered only what can be applied and measured according to predetermined performativity criteria*' (Lyotard, 1984, p.53). This creates a need for experts (that is, high and middle management executives, computer scientists, cyberneticists, linguists, mathematicians etc.), whom the educational institutions are called on to train. Outside the Universities, or institutions with a professional orientation, knowledge will '*no longer be transmitted en block, once and for all.... rather it will be served à la carte to adults... for the purpose of improving their skills and chances of promotion*' (p. 49).

This mentality is conspicuously present in every policy directive towards the reform of the 'system', not only at the highest, but also at its lowest echelons. As it is suggested in most of the official documents of the competent Greek and European authorities, lifelong learning is 'addressed' to individual learners and is inextricably linked to 'adaptability' and 'employability'. The main aim of the various EU Operational Programs (not only of the OPEIVT II) is to create: '*an integrated system which builds complementary links between education, vocational training, access to the labour market, lifelong learning and the continuous vocational improvement and professional development of the labour force*' (European Commission, 2003b, p. 2).
The basic objectives of this overall strategy of lifelong learning are (p.3):

➢ *The provision of basic knowledge and skills for all, at the level of basic school education … so that the school acts as a foundation for lifelong learning.*

➢ *The modernization of university education … through developing closer links between education and production and fostering entrepreneurship.*

➢ *…. The provision of a range of opportunities for young people, the encouragement of individualised learning … and the promotion of high quality and flexibility in the training provided.*

In the definition of the lifelong learning strategic objectives, an invariably vague rhetoric of 'social partnership' is also emerging. The 'social partners' are called on to make an important contribution to the creation of new structures in cooperation with local government agencies. In this context, a new bill for *the National System of Connection of Vocational Education and Training with Employment was* introduced (2004) by the Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour, to '*meet the new needs that have emerged due to the rapid development of education and training systems as well as the transformations in contemporary working settings*' (European Commission, 2003b, p. 24). Within the provisions of the bill, a 'National Council of Connection of Vocational Education and Training with Employment' was established, in which the Ministers and 'social partners' will participate. The Council is a body that can formulate and coordinate national policies, set quantitative and qualitative targets, regulations and principles monitor and evaluate procedures. According to the Guideline 15 ('Adaptability as an element in Lifelong Learning') of the 'National Action Plan for Employment' (MoE, 2003), among the initiatives taken by the 'social partners', is the '*Guidance and encouragement to [*their*] members … to disseminate the concept and practice of lifelong learning*' (p. 5). In other words, and in stark contrast to past practices, when the Greek State was the main *designer* and *provider* of (officially accredited) training, now the representative of employers' associations are called on to contribute to setting up a framework of lifelong learning within the workplace context, on the promise that generous EU funding will come to supplement their efforts.

It must be stressed, however, that the bulk of the official documents stress the 'employability', 'flexibility' and 'adaptability' of the (rather vaguely defined) 'national workforce' (MoE, 2003; MNERA, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2005). Very few references are made to what a former Commissioner for Education & Culture envisaged of the role of Education and Training (Reding, 'Preface' in CEDEFOP, 2001): that it is '*not merely necessary to sustain the employability of wage-earners and their ability to adapt to labour market requirements*', but a mechanism for the promotion of '*active citizenship and strengthening social cohesion*'. Furthermore, it seems that what is altogether abandoned is the original humanist concept of 'lifelong education' promoted by UNESCO in the 1970s, as propounded by the 'Faure report' (Borg and Mayo, 2005).

Issues of concern

Knowledge and 'Learning Society'?

'Knowledge' is considered – by the dominant discourse, that is — a major 'production factor' in a post-materialist, technologically advanced capitalist world. This misinterpretation masks the fact that, although modern economies are based not only on material resources and traditional industrial-production processes, but increasingly on abstract, non-manual, mental *labour,* the relations of production remain invariably what K. Marx had so vividly and analytically described back in the late 19th century: unequal and exploitative. Our small and dispersed 'knowledge societies' – and we are talking of course about the Western World, not acknowledging the contribution of cheap *manual labour* to our *knowledge-based economies*— depend, sometimes almost exclusively, on knowledge that is *produced, controlled, transmitted* and *manipulated* by large multinational corporations, which possess *monopolistic* or *oligopolistic* privileges in the world market(s). Thus, instead of giving opportunities for human emancipation, the new dominant discourse that perceives knowledge as something 'neutral' and 'objective' – which is 'somewhere out there' ready to 'be grasped' and utilised by isolated disempowered individuals— paints a rather illusionary picture of the world and entails the danger of creating new forms of disempowerment, alienation and subordination (Stamatis, 2005, p. 119; for more theoretical elaboration see Kastells, 1996; Hill and Cole, 2001; Rikowski, 2002).

This is of course far from saying that all the existing forms of *moral, legal* and *political principles*, prevalent in most of the contemporary technologically and economically advanced societies (the so-called 'Western World'), simply 'reflect' or are invariably 'absorbed' by the technical and instrumental rationality of late capitalism; they are not merely an ideological-legitimation mechanism of capitalist production. The normative implications of certain of the above forms are indeed contradictory to the basic elements of capitalist reproduction (i.e. accumulation of capital, appropriation of surplus value, unequal weighting in the production sphere between owners of capital and direct producers etc.).

Nevertheless, as we are marching into the 21st century, it is surprising to see that the 'right to learning' is presented as an unalienable right, which *should be exercised* by each individual within the limits of a life-span, but with no guarantees of actually this happening, given certain restrictions and obstacles that deal

with personal, familial and wider socio-economic specificities. Everyone is *required* to participate in the 'Knowledge Society', since there is so much knowledge 'on offer', but no one has ever seriously believed that *all have the same opportunities*, and most of all, the *same desires and aspirations* for what is being offered.

A Homogenous 'Knowledge Society'?

What is prevalent in all the official documents that outline the OPEIVT II –and indeed the whole Community's legal framework—is the homogenisation of various social groups under such simplistic categories as 'women', 'unemployed', 'immigrants', 'handicapped persons' etc. Issues of class position, social stratification, occupational hierarchies, geographical, linguistic and cultural specificities, and, most of all, differentiated individual life histories and personal preferences are invariably ignored or understated.

For example, 'student mobility' is generally considered a good thing in promoting the 'common' Higher Education Area. But in terms of debate on the implications of the respective policy directives, it is almost absent. The fact that wide disparities do exist between various Higher Education institutions within EU countries – not to mention between countries – in terms of size, infrastructures, organizational regulations, administrative procedures and language popularity, is invariably glossed over.

One more example of oversimplification of classification criteria and neutralisation of certain 'groups' is the OPEIVT II 'action line' (*sic)* titled 'Improvement of women's access to the labour market'. Women are considered mainly as a 'homogenous' social group in risk of social exclusion, of under-representation in education, of subordination in family life and of constant discrimination in the labour market. One of the measures adopted, within the context of Higher Education is – as noted above – the introduction of Gender Studies programmes in the various Higher Education departments, or the enrichment of already established programmes with the (socially construed) 'gender' dimension'.[7] The main line of argument can be summarized in the 'equal opportunities', or 'liberal-feminist' ideology, which stresses the individual rights aspects of gender inequalities (Arnot & Weiner, 1989; Blossfeld & Hakim, 1997; Hakim, 2000; Arnot, 2002). The Marxist-feminist approach, the radical-feminist approach and recent theoretical contributions towards a 'post-structuralist' re-evaluation and re-examination of the notions of 'gender', 'male' and 'female' remain untouchable in the discourse developed through the official language and target-setting of the OPEIVT II projects.[8]

A certain kind of digital 'determinism' is also characteristic of the guiding principles of almost all the OPEIVT II projects. It is exclusively stressed that the increasing potential of information and communication technology – especially of the Internet – has the power to widen access to information and enhance communication capacity, along with promoting social inclusion and facilitating democratic participation[9]. Although I am not an advocate of the 'digital divide' thesis – which argues that the Internet advantages privileged groups while further marginalizing disadvantaged social categories— at the same time I am opposing those optimistic predictions of authors such as Bell (1976), who '*saw new information technologies as paving the way for a more meritocratic and open society*', or Castells (1996), who argued that '*the formation of "networked societies" would lead to a proliferation of horizontally organized "communities of choice", rather than hierarchical relations of class and status*' (Willis and Stranter, 2006, p.44). The paternalistic rhetoric that urges (Greek) citizens to get acquainted with the use of ICTs, through heavily subsidized by the Greek State and the EU authorities training programs, seems to disregard the fact that possession of high income and occupational and educational resources gives access to additional information, which may further exacerbate existing social disparities and strengthen advantage. Even when a wide diffusion of a technology is emerging (a process often referred to as the 'trickle-down' effect), meaning that access eventually spreads to those who are disadvantaged, this is the result of commodification of technology and of globalised market competition, both of which are heavily situated within a certain socio-economic context, where 'allocative' and 'authoritative resources' (Giddens, 1984), in the form of capital – mainly 'economic', but also 'cultural' and 'social' – are unevenly distributed.

'Life-long learning' opportunities for whom? The 'demand' and 'supply' sides

It is widely proclaimed that promoting life-long learning opportunities, especially through the use of ICTs, is the only means of overcoming existing barriers to participation, particularly barriers of 'time, space and pace' (Edwards, Sieminski and Zeldin, 1993; Essom and Thomson 1999).

Thus, great significance is placed on the 'demand', rather than the 'supply' side of the equation. In other words, academic and policy-makers, who actually prepare the calls for proposals, seem to be in general agreement about who is currently excluded from

participation, and therefore who the policies of inclusion should be aimed at. The policies promoted through the OPEIVT II and other Community-funded programs (e.g. The 'Operational Program for the Information Society', 2000-2006), have tended to be concerned with removing the barriers that prevent these specific groups of the population from participating in learning.

First of all, it must be said, that despite the 'rosy' picture that official rhetoric wishes to sketch, research evidence, even in countries with a longer history of ICT use and no direct or indirect financial help from the European Structural Funds (e.g. in the UK), often suggests that work-based and ICT-based training has not increased, and may even have declined over the last decade. At the same time, some socio-economic inequalities in adult participation in education and training have worsened (Gorard and Selwyn, 1999a-b; Selwyn and Gorard, 1999; Williams, Selwyn and Gorard, 2000; Gorard, Selwyn and Rees, 2000). There are also *theoretical* and *ethical* issues that arise from the very essence of the discourse evolving around issues of knowledge expansion and/or enrichment, through the use of ICTs (supposedly one of the major levers of change, according to the policy-makers who administer the OPEIVT Programs).

Above all, this approach – even if we set aside problems of class position etc.— neglects another key barrier which also prevents people from engaging in learning, the dispositional (or motivational) barriers. If the problem is based upon people not wanting to participate then it is difficult to envisage how these supply-led schemes are going to be successful in terms of widening participation. If particular individuals are not well disposed towards the notion of 'learning' then removing other more tangible barriers such as cost and so on will have very limited effect (Gorard & Selwyn 1999a-b). As Dyer (1997) demonstrates, the 'disconnected' are characterised by their geographical location and low socio-economic status; with inner-city as well as rural areas least likely to have access to even basic telecommunications networks. Thus, in order to gain access to on-line learning, issues of space and locality suddenly take on a great importance.

As barriers of any kind are, by definition, more effective against the less motivated, it is not clear how merely making changes on the *supply* side will tackle this significant barrier. It can be strongly argued, therefore, that in order for these schemes to succeed, it is not enough to simply *supply* new and innovative learning opportunities, there must also be a *demand* for them. Rees *et al.* (2000) argue that decisions about whether or not to participate in post compulsory education tend to reflect 'deep-seated attitudes

towards learning in formal settings, such as educational institutions and work places' (p.11).

One more implication of the life-long learning rhetoric – which is at the top of the agenda, not only of the OPEIVT II funding, but also of the Greek government's recent legislation[10]— is the increasing cultivation of the idea of 'personal responsibility' for any future 'investment' that a person may wish to make in order to improve her/his negotiating power in a highly competitive labour market. In other words, the 'human capital' – as a revamped Marxian 'labour power'– is now the key-word, and it is the tool – the only tool, some might say – that a person can 'trade' in order to survive in a world of uncertainty and high risk (Beck, 1992).

Individuals – and not 'citizens' – are being seduced to 'invest' in their future well-being, by accumulating 'credits', 'learning units', 'training certificates', 'diplomas' and many other 'trading tools', which in turn will have to present to their prospective employers. 'Flexibility', 'adaptability' and 'openness to the labour market' in teaching/learning are the main driving forces in the quest – for the EU — to becoming '*the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world*'[11].

As a result, and in line with traditional and modern neo-liberal principles, what the human capital approach of the OPEIVIT II (and not only) is promoting is a solipsistic individualism, which rules out every prospect of social solidarity and collective action (Stamatis, 2005, pp.160-169).

Notes:

1. The data were taken from various statistical e-reports, downloaded from the Managing Authority's site, at: http://www.epeaek.gr/epeaek/.

2. According to the Greek legal framework for Higher Education, the 'department' is the basic academic unit, with its own economic, administrative and academic autonomy.

3. For example, as it is clearly stated in the Council Regulation 1260/99 (L 161, 26.06.1999), article 1, one of the three main aims of the Structural Funds and the Community Support Framework is: '*the modernisation of the various [national] educational, training and employment systems…*'.

4. Where the European Council (23 and 24 March 2000) set out the target – to be met by all member states — for the European Union of becoming '*the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the*

world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.'

5. Downloaded from 'EUROPA', the E.U. Portal, online at: http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/cha/ c11078.htm [Date of access: 18.01.2006].

6. L. 2860/2000 (*Greek Governmental Gazette*, 251A'/14.11.2000).

7. See the various Framework Principles and Guidelines published by the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (MNERA, 2001).

8. Despite the richness of content and theoretical approaches that are being developed in this kind of Higher Education programs (at under- or post-graduate level) by the academics and research staff (for a recent review of Women's studies across Europe, see the ATHENA report, 2001), the OPEIVIT II - 'Action Line 4' clearly sets as its main aim the (quantitative) '*increase of female employment, and the promotion of women's work in new working environments',* revealing a rather economistic approach to gender inequalities in education and the labour market at large.

9. For more details see the OPEIVT II Managing Authority's site, at: http://www.epeaek.gr/epeaek/en.

10. In May 2005 a new Bill on Lifelong Learning was passed through the Greek Parliament. The new Law gives to every Higher Education Institute (University or Higher Technological Institute) the go-ahead for the establishment of Lifelong Learning. This will be developed in separate administrative units inside each Higher Education Institute, and will have a wide discretion over the necessary funding sources.

11. See the 'Lisbon Strategy', as described above.

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Critical Mass

Preface: This short article was written by Phil Badger and Glenn Rikowski in late 1996. In the light of developments in education policy in recent years; specifically the rise of Academies (where sponsors can have an important say in the moral climate or ethos of schools), the proliferation of faith schools and the continuing debate on multiculturalism (see Cole, 2007; and Sen, 2006), the relevance of the themes and issues in this article has, if anything, increased. It has been reproduced here in its original form. Our original institutional affiliations are in place too.

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Critical Mass

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The kids, it seems, are on the rampage, out of control – in serious need of moral re-direction. But when people talk of the moral decline of society, of young people out of control and of the need for moral education to set things right, we have a duty to ask what they see as the form and content of such education. We may suspect that some, although not all, of the more reactionary supporters of moral education mean something akin to moral drilling sessions with teachers taking the role of ethical sergeant-majors and children endlessly repeating or writing out phrases such as "Thou shalt not steal".

Obviously, this image is extreme and only the most unreflective and ignorant apostles of "morality" in education would advocate such a

practice, but it is less the promoters of moral education and more the less critical elements of their audience with whom we need to be concerned. We may suggest that "moral drill" will be ineffective just as the rote-learning of other subject matter often is because it is forgotten outside the classroom door or the school gate. Yet if we are ourselves challenged to say what form moral education should take then we may suspect that the moral drill brigade will be alarmed by our inevitably liberal answer.

Moral education, if it is to have any effect, must encourage children to assess values and to internalise them or not on the basis of that assessment. Young people need to claim *ownership* of values for themselves, and this means turning moral issues into a practical subject which asks them to confront the complexities of moral issues armed with their intellect and the task of trying to do the right thing. This approach would no doubt cause consternation to certain parts of the political Right because it questions the notion that morality is a series of commandments carved in stone and suggests that a questioning attitude is itself desirable.

Such liberal ideas may be castigated by some as not being part of the answer to the problems we face but the cause of them. Liberalism, it will be argued, is fatally allied to moral scepticism and relativism and, as such, is the enemy of social peace and moral consensus. Such a reaction is however fallacious. In truth, the conservative reaction to the liberal case is borne of the ultimate belief that, as Samuel Butler put it: "The foundations of morality are like all other foundations: if you dig too much about them the superstructure comes tumbling down".

The conservative instinct is that giving rational grounds for our values is impossible, and that therefore to attempt to explore our values is folly. Tradition and its unquestioned acceptance are the bedrock of a stable society from the conservative viewpoint. The problem with this is that while such a position may be satisfactory in a society in which the pace of social change is slow, and social mobility is severely constricted, it is not credible in the *laissez-faire* cultural melting-pot in which we now live. The whole context of advanced industrial society in its Anglo-American form is ruthlessly individualistic and engenders anti-traditionalist values which undermine notions of "community" and settled values. In this situation, the heady mixture of free market economics and social traditionalism which we associate with modern British Conservatism is bound by its incompatible ingredients to curdle horribly.

The alternative – for contrary to infamous assertion there is one – is to embrace a liberal rather than a conservative model of values and

to further acknowledge that it is the Right who suffer most from moral scepticism in their reluctance to "dig around in the foundations of morality" for fear that we will discover that the whole house is built on sand. 'Liberalism', of course, is a very broad church. There are some pews we would not wish to sit on. Certain species of liberalism, especially those varieties which cling to notions of 'market freedom' and the privatisation of public goods, are wholly deficient as tools for framing a new moral discourse for education. At best, such liberalisms result in taking the rising academic subject of 'business ethics' seriously. At worst, they cultivate forms of 'market nihilism' (where the only 'values' are those resting on Money and market advantage), the celebration of greed or the cynical moralisation of economic advantage and privilege. We would advocate a liberal analysis of the place of moral debate within the classroom which would not stop when it encountered entrenched economic and social interests.

In the end, the problem of order in our present situation is not one that we can solve by introducing the odd lesson on civics or the like, but it is one which may be partially addressed by giving a central place to moral education within the curriculum in compulsory schooling and 16-19 education and training. However, there are evident problems with the sort of top-down approach as developed by the National Forum for Values of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA). The 'shared moral values' outlined by SCAA – in the areas of society, relationships, the self and the environment – must be critically assessed and appropriated by young people themselves if they are to gain 'ownership' of these values. The application of SCAA's New Moral Commandments for young people requires then to think about the economic, social and political environment they live in if they are to make informed moral decisions. Young people also need to handle the difficult issues surrounding the clash of moral principles – and SCAA's list of moral values readily suggests possible sources of moral dilemma and contradiction. To be fair to SCAA and the Values Forum – and particularly to Nick Tate, its Chief Executive – they have realised that moral education alone is not enough. Tate's advocacy of a Critical Thinking A-level is in line with our escape route out of the moral educational maze.

Moral education, then, needs to be supplemented by two additional educational inputs: critical thinking skills and a renewal of social studies in the curriculum. The former is essential for analysing moral dilemmas and conundrums thrown up by everyday life. Some leading employers support the development of critical thinking education on this score. Social studies would provide students with an understanding of the context in which moral principles relate to

moral behaviour and actions. There are problems with this line of thought. First, on critical thinking, cadres within the Conservative Party and the educational right brigade would wish to place substantial caveats around the notion of 'thinking' (keep it safe, constrained and bounded by the 'higher' values of family and nation) and would balk at anything 'critical' (thou should be uncritical of British economic and social arrangements). Secondly, social studies and critical analysis have been on the run – especially in post-compulsory education and training – for the last twenty years. There is no sign that this trend will be reversed. These *retro* features of the British educational landscape point towards the need to view the whole 'moral education debate' more broadly in terms of political economy.

As we see it, the issues at stake are wider and more fundamental than have been acknowledged thus far and connect to our future success as a society in both social and economic terms. British society, as Will Hutton has argued, is mired in the inadequacies of its own political economy and the roots of that inadequacy lie in the exclusion, either voluntary or compulsory, of so many of our citizens from political and economic life. The existence of a large group of individuals who see themselves as politically powerless and socially and economically helpless is potentially disastrous in a whole range of ways. Politics may be too important to be left to politicians but the average young citizen feels that he or she has nothing or little to say to them or *vice versa*. The standard of political debate reveals contempt for the intelligence of the population and the media's endless search for the sound-bite makes sustained argument almost impossible. In such a context, it is all the more important that we develop the critical faculties of our young people so that we begin to demand and deserve better from those who lead us.

Recent results from projects promoting accelerated cognitive development through a problem-solving approach to science topics show that the development of thinking skills in one area can and does spill over into an enhanced performance in others. We may suspect that this would be the case with critical thinking skills, which are anyway the foundation of success in so many traditional academic subjects.

The problems that face us are not to be laid at the door of education alone, as has been attempted by various governments over the last twenty years in relation to the so-called "skills deficit", but should properly be seen as systemic. It is no good us developing critical thinking for citizenship if our political and social frameworks do not admit of the activities of citizenship. What is

needed is a movement towards an educational future in which moral education, critical thinking in education (and beyond the school gate) and, finally, a renaissance in social studies teaching and learning are key driving forces. Such an approach would be part of a more general programme of moral and political renewal which transcends both 'traditional' and 'market' forms of moral discourse. Neither should we distribute these educational goodies only to those doing A-levels. We are in need of a critical mass rather than an enlightened few.

6th December 1996

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What is Moral Education?

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As this subject is so personal to each individual and each society they inhabit, this article is personal in both its nature and content. I hope to show that as I consider morality to be an abstract concept, and that it is difficult to put it into any one category of behaviour, that this means that moral education cannot be defined categorically either. This article is essentially a discussion between me and the reader about what I consider moral education to be, based on my own experience of it and the reading and research into it I have undertaken. It is not an exercise merely to *define* moral education, as I do not think that is possible.

Morals and morality pervade every aspect of our lives. Even this piece of work is covered by moralistic guidelines as, if it were punctuated by gratuitous use of obscenities, it would be judged unworthy of an academic reading and assessment, as these have no place in its context or content. How do I know this even though nobody has actually told me this here and now? Bull in his book *Moral Education* (1969) explains this point thus: 'The child is not born with a built-in moral conscience. But he is born with those natural, biologically purposive capacities that make him potentially a moral being' (p.15). I know this because I was taught moral concepts and I am now fully aware enough to be able to process my actions in any given situation in respect to these concepts. Although I do not remember being sat down and actually "taught" to be moral, I was taught what was right and wrong and what was acceptable behaviour in all the spheres I participated in. These spheres were home, school, church, other people's houses, clubs and societies.

According to Wilson et al (1967, p.129): 'A child needs to accept ... a certain code of behaviour, parental commands, traditional rules etc.' Of course, all children have their own interpretations of moral concepts, and obeying these different rules in different situations was my first clue that they were flexible and that they depended on different factors. It became clear that the variation on a theme I had

to choose determined whether I was 'acceptable' as a person in each particular sphere. Durkheim (in Wilson, 1961) says:

> The child must come to feel himself what there is in a rule which determines that he should abide by it willingly. In other words he must sense the moral authority in the rule, which renders it worthy of respect (p154).

After this came questions: why can I do this at home but not at school? Why don't other people's children have to do the same things I do in the same way?

This then started the processing stage. Once again, with guidance I was not consciously aware of all the time. Some things were universal across all spheres but were spoken of in different ways and were punished or rewarded in different ways too. But the foundation was recognizable to me as a child; it was just the application that had to be learnt in each case, and that happened again seemingly without conscious thought on my part. In this way, any deviation from this foundation was also easily recognizable and prompted an enquiry:

> Teachers and parents should confront the child with their own moral codes in a very clear and definite manner so that, whether he accepts or rejects a code, at least he knows what he is accepting or rejecting (Wilson in Wilson et al, 1967, p.132).

Somewhere in the subconscious was an idea of what should happen, which led to the knowledge that if the opposite of this happened, it was wrong. This 'wrongness' was purely an instinctive reaction to something different when very young, but later a different wrongness could be attached to certain things; that of being morally wrong, going against that which is right and expected behaviour within that sphere. Children, unfortunately by their very receptiveness to adult or peer notions of behavioural norms, are also the most susceptible to behavioural abnormalities. They have not yet learnt the process part of moral education and cannot always fathom out for themselves what is wrong and what is right, or indeed, the reason it is wrong or right if it is not immediately obvious, i.e. 'something painful' is wrong. A framework of rules and conditions is essential, argues Wilson as the foundation of learning what is 'right' or 'wrong'. He argues:

> The child needs other things, such as love, emotional
> security, food, warmth, enough sleep and so on. All these
> things as well as a framework of rules are necessary
> (Wilson, in Wilson et al 1967, p.129).

The misuse of affection, for example, is not enough at this age to cause concern until somebody else points out the wrongness, or until they have sufficient experience to work out for themselves that it is wrong, but more importantly, why it is wrong.

Moral education starts early but proceeds at very different speeds according to the domestic circumstances of the small child. It gathers momentum when the sphere is enlarged, or divides, and as this process is repeated throughout life. It evolves for each new sphere of society (e.g. family, education, and religion) and the circumstances encountered there. The inhabitants of these spheres play a very important role in the moral education of the child, whether they intend to or not. This does not change throughout a person's life. They and everybody they come into contact with influence, or are influenced by, that contact. Many familiar, but also many strange and indeed conflicting attitudes and behaviours will be encountered. Processes of practical moral education, as outlined here, also change over time, and between cultures and social groups. The classical French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, noted that:

> Not only does man's range of behaviour change, but the
> forces that set limits are not absolutely the same at
> different historical periods (Durkheim in Wilson, 1961,
> p.52).

These social forces will all 'educate' the individual and influence the kind of person they become. The person is always evolving and will be constantly changed by this interaction all their lives. These spheres are likely to overlap as well as repel each other: family, religion, career, friends, and school will all strive to mould the person into what they want them to be.

My understanding of the purpose of moral education is to show the child as early as possible to recognize these influences and to give them a foundation on which they can make judgements as they encounter each moral variant within the various societal spheres.

Musgrove (1978) says that moral education:

> Must, therefore, take account of the way in which these choices seem to be made. Attention must be given to the knowledge needed, the relevant structures to be used, the skills necessary for interpreting the thoughts, feelings and actions of others involved, and to the process of weighting used by moral actors as they balance these elements (p.125).

Obviously a child can only be taught what they are capable of learning at any stage in their development, but this type of education is an all-round, all the time type of instruction and everybody is both learner and teacher with whomever they interact. Thus:

> All morality consists of relationships between persons; that its three concerns are therefore, self, others and the relationship between them; and that the heart of morality is therefore respect for persons. [The child's concept of a person] does not have to be learnt as such, [but] it does have to be built up by moral education in terms of knowledge, habits and attitudes (Bull, 1969, p.127).

A large range and variety of interactions, then, will help a child develop a moral sense quicker than one type of interaction only. A narrow range of experience, therefore, leads to rigidity and stagnation in moral development as only one variant is being encountered and moral process is not being developed along with moral content. Whilst one needs to be in place to a certain extent before the other can function, they do need to run alongside one another after a short period as they influence one another at later stages in the child's development. Bull (1969), Straughan (1992) and Wilson (in Wilson et al, 1967) all talk about this in their own way. For example, Bull says:

> The practice of virtuous action therefore involves three conditions: Conscious knowledge of it, deliberate will of it 'for its own sake', and an 'unchangeable disposition to act in the right way'. Moral education must clearly be concerned with all three (p.124).

Straughan is more succinct; he argues that:

> What determines the level of moral development a person is at is not the particular action he judges to be right or wrong, but his reasons for so judging (1992, p.19).

Wilson (in Wilson et al, 1967) simply says that 'moral concepts involve the notions of 'intention', of 'understanding', and 'knowing what you are doing" (p.45). I obviously have my own views like everybody else on what morality is, what it means to me and the people I know, and unfortunately my own likes and dislikes of other people's morals.

Many books have been written about this subject and I am only touching on a very few of them here, as parents and indeed society in general, has shifting views on morality; or rather, the lack of it that children in each generation seem to show. Fears and worries over the state of the younger generations in many works are interchangeable. There is currently a debate going on about whether children in England are 'lazy' and obsessed with computer games, whilst ignoring the real world and moral issues, for example (see AOL Lifestyle, 2006). Minus the fears the about the possible effects on moral thinking of information and communications technology, the same sentiments and worries were written about in the early 19th century and again in the 20th (see Frith, 1980).

Social change, progress and the leaving behind of the old ways all seem to be outpacing moral changes. As Marx and Engels noted (1848), with the development of capitalist society: 'All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned' (p.83). This process appears to apply to morality too, as values shift and change with developments in society. Morality, it seems, clings to the past and is slow to change. Emile Durkheim felt this very strongly:

> What is meant by morality as we see it in practice? Certainly it involves consistency, regularity of conduct; what is moral today must be moral tomorrow (in Wilson, 1961, p.xi).

Musgrove, writing nearly a century later, noted that:

> Because of the precarious nature of current moral meaning there will always be a tension between contemporary morality and what a few feel ought to be (1978, p.129).

Education is even slower to adapt, but then it never has caught up and actually led in the moral debate. As Musgrave makes clear:

> The content of the moral curriculum, its pedagogy and pacing, the academic subjects to be involved and the school organization needed are all clearly related to the total social structure within which any school is set. Very rarely does a school attempt to change the moral code of a society (Musgrove, 1978, p.128).

To educate, one needs to know what to teach and what the outcome of that teaching needs to be. This, then, is the key problem. When it comes to morality and moral education, nobody has a fixed idea on that outcome. Durkheim identified this, as he says:

> These common qualities constitute other essential elements of morality, since they are found in all moral behaviour, and consequently, we must try to identify them. Once we understand them, we will have determined, at the same time, another basic element of moral character – that is to say, what it is that prompts man to behave in a way corresponding to this definition. And a new goal will be indicated for the educator (in Wilson, 1961, p.55).

Wilson et al (1967) say roughly the same thing, as:

> If we want to be able to show that certain types of education produce 'morally educated' people, we must first identify a 'morally educated' person so that we know what types of education to look for (1967, p.191).

As it is constantly evolving, the concept of a morally educated person is also at the whim of changing circumstance. One cannot determine what forces or lessons are required to make up this morally educated prize if one cannot agree on what form the prize should take in the first place. Even science and mathematics, which also shift and change, do so methodically and therefore an educational plan can be drawn up. What it is to be 'moral', however, is an abstract notion and as such covers all disciplines and any and all change in any one of them affects it. When all of these are in flux at the same time – and for the last three hundred years or so they seem to have been in this state without any let up at all – morality is tossed about between all of them like a leaf on a breeze, never actually settling. It focuses on one apparent certainty, only to find another has changed and that the focus is no longer clear. It would not be so bad but these shifts attack the very

foundations rather than just the form of the structure it supports. The attempt to live and teach the moral life is constantly being shored up, but never completely rebuilt, for:

> The object of much contemporary moral education in so-called free countries is to make moral men-in-the-street into morally well-informed citizens, but to some extent, and even in non-democratic societies, the process of growing to adulthood inevitably poses questions that force many people to reconsider the moral recipes learned in childhood and routinely applied up to that moment (Musgrave, 1978, p56).

This then, affects the moral content, but, at the same time, also the moral process, as all these different areas influence, and are influenced by each and every change. It is a never ending spiral, and it seems all anyone can do is constantly play catch-up.

It seemed so clear in earlier centuries: right and wrong were quite clearly defined and nothing was allowed near the foundation of their morality, and indeed there was nothing that could not be absorbed and included over time. The difference now is that there seems to be no time to absorb one change before another comes and the old ideals can only go so far before they encounter a circumstance they were never meant to cope with as quite simply it did not exist then. Moral projects, values, and ultimately moral education, all founder on the 'speed of life', which appears to be increasing (see Neary and Rikowski, 2000).

The one great defender of the stable moral life that kept things the same for centuries was religion. Once this was questioned and found wanting in the face of new circumstances (the Enlightenment being the biggest one, but also industrialisation and discoveries by, Copernicus, Darwin, Einstein and others), they vainly tried to resist. Religion's power over people's moral content and processes, in Europe especially, was slowly broken. The religious foundation of morality was considered unstable. Durkheim acknowledges this but claims:

> ...to replace it usefully, it is not enough to cancel out the old. A complete recasting of our educational technique must now engage our efforts (in Wilson, 1961, p.14).

However, a stable foundation for morality is necessary in any society so that it can move forward effectively, and the problem is that nothing has replaced the foundation that

religion kept so solid for so long. Of course, during the time and places where religion was significant, progress and evolution was slowed down. Thus, it appears that in order for society to evolve and progress a trade-off has to be made and morality' like religion, seems to become a discarded item.

I will finish this article by saying that I myself have endeavoured to teach morals and morality to my own children. I made choices for them that I considered the right ones for our situation and the social spheres and forms that we inhabit. As they have grown older they have questioned these choices and either accepted or rejected them as they have seen fit. As Wilson notes: 'A child or adolescent must be given a clear lead, and a chance to rebel against it' (in Wilson et al, 1967 p.152). Their actions and choices will change again in time when another set of circumstances they encounter force a rethink of their earlier actions, just as mine have done throughout my life. This is part of the never ending moral education that every individual and society goes through and it has to be recognised that this cannot be put in a box, labelled and pulled out to be used as and when required by moral educators. However, in attempting to do that, some issues have been resolved, to some extent, by the individual, at the individual level:

> Moral principles and actions are things which the individual can only believe and do for himself. He can be helped but not forced (Wilson et al, 1967, p.142).

In a way, therefore, we must each make sense of the shifting sands of morality. Although we can look to guides, such as parents, teachers and priests, eventually we must try to carve out our own moral sense. Ultimately, we must become our own moral educator.

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Teaching ethical issues in Information Technology: how and when

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1.   Introduction

Information technology is of course a very much a taken-for-granted part of everyday life today. There are, however, many ethical issues that need to be considered and developed in I.T. This article will firstly consider some of the philosophical issues surrounding ethics and then examine some of the various ethical issues in I.T. specifically. Some of the different methods for teaching ethical issues in I.T. will then outlined as well as a consideration about when it is appropriate to teach these different ethical I.T. issues.

2.   Philosophical issues surrounding 'ethics'

The question of 'what are ethics' has always been a central part of philosophy. So, any meaningful discussion about ethics must surely begin with a philosophical enquiry. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy refers to the great philosophers Aristotle, Socrates and Plato, saying that:

> *Aristotle conceives of ethical theory as a field distinct from the theoretical sciences. Its methodology must match its subject matter – good action – and must respect the fact that in this field many generalizations hold only for the most part. We study ethics in order to improve our lives, and therefore its principal concern is the nature of human well-being. Aristotle follows Socrates and Plato in taking the virtues to be central to a well-lived life. Like Plato, he regards the ethical virtues (justice, courage, temperance and so on) as complex rational, emotional and social skills* (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, p.1).

The Encylopedia continues, saying:

> *…Aristotle is deeply indebted to Plato's moral philosophy, particularly Plato's central insight that moral thinking must be integrated with our emotions and appetites, and that the preparation for such unity of character should begin with childhood education…* (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, p.2).

Meanwhile, Kallman and Grillo (1992) argue that:

> *Ethics has to do with making a principle-based choice between competing alternatives. In the simplest ethical dilemmas, the choice is between right and wrong* (Kallman and Grillo, 1996, p.3).

Ethics then, are often very subjective, and connected to our emotions and our basic sense of 'right' and 'wrong'. This means that it can be difficult to define ethics rigorously. This also applies to ethics in I.T.

Kallman and Grillo consider whether 'computer ethics' are different from 'regular ethics; and argue that:

> *Most experts agree that there is actually no special category of computer ethics; rather, there are ethical situations in which computers are involved* (Kallman and Grillo, 1996, p.4).

This would seem to be the most sensible way to approach the subject. However, it must be noted that there are a great variety of ethical issues that need to be considered in I.T., ranging from plagiarism, to ergonomics and the digital divide, through to netiquette and nanotechnology. These will all be considered in this article. Furthermore, the meaning of 'ethics' might be interpreted differently in these different circumstances.

3.   Various ethical issues in I.T.

3.1   Introduction

Any analysis of information technology should begin with a definition of it. There are various definitions of I.T. The British Advisory Council for Applied Research and Development defines it quite succinctly as:

> *The scientific, technological and engineering disciplines and the management techniques used in information handling and processing; their applications; computers and their interaction with men and machines; and associated social, economic and cultural matters* (British Advisory Council for Applied Research and Development, 1980).

Various writers have referred to the importance of adopting an ethical/moral approach to I.T. Mason says that:

> *Our moral imperative is clear. We must insure that information technology, and the information it handles, are used to enhance the dignity of mankind* (Mason, 1986, p.10).

Professional computing bodies realise the importance of laying down good ethical foundations, and as Bowyer notes

> *…almost every professional organization dealing with the field of computing has published its own code of ethics* (Bowyer, 2001, p.47).

This includes organisations such as the Association of Information Technology Professionals (AITP), the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) and the Computer Society of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineer (IEEE-CS). The ethical codes of different organisations have some differences, but they are all in broad agreement in regard to most of the important general issues. These include, for example, being honest in professional relationships and protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all information that is entrusted to the professional.

Ethical issues in I.T. differ from general ethical issues in a variety of ways. Parker, Swope and Baker note that ethical problems involving computers pose a special challenge, for a number of different reasons. Firstly, there is less personal contact. We sometimes associate the moral decisions that we make with our face-to-face contacts, including moral decisions on issues such as euthanasia and abortion. Such face-to-face contact is missing when using I.T. systems. This is why various 'codes of ethical practice' have been developed for email communication on some networks, for example, which can be referred to as 'netiquette'. Without such a code, and its penalties, some people would probably not address each other in an appropriate manner in these forums. Secondly, the speed of computers means that the likely repercussions of our actions might not be adequately considered, and this could lead to unfortunate consequences. An inappropriate email might be sent in a moment of rage, which the sender later regrets, but meanwhile irreversible decisions have been made on the basis of this! Thirdly, Parker, Swope and Baker point out that information in electronic form is more fragile than in paper form. Information in electronic form can easily be changed, it is vulnerable to unauthorised access and it can easily be reproduced. This raises questions in regard to issues such as intellectual property rights, plagiarism, piracy and privacy. Fourthly, there are issues around information itself. Information integrity, information confidentiality and information availability/non-availability can conflict with notions of information sharing. Fifthly, Parker, Swope and Baker point out that a lack of

widespread means of authorisation and authentication means that I.T. can be exposed to unethical practices.

Meanwhile, Kallman and Grillo (1996) outline various **rights** and **duties**, which can also be seen to be important areas to consider in relation to ethical issues in I.T. In regard to '**rights'**, they refer to the 'right to know', such as the extent to which we have a right to know and have access to information about us in a database. Also, the 'right to privacy', and the extent to which we have a right to control the use of information that relates to us, such as our personal medical information. Finally, the 'right to property', and the extent to which we have a right to protect our computer resources from misuse and abuse, such as viruses. Under **'duties'** they refer to 'confidentiality' and the need for a professional to protect information from unauthorised access and use and 'impartiality', whereby a professional should aim to be fair and impartial. An example of 'impartiality' is where a software company makes new releases available to all customers, on the same basis. The extent to which such 'rights' and 'duties' are enforceable in practice is clearly debatable, but they provide some useful guidelines for those concerned with ethical issues in I.T.

There are also differences between wider ethical I.T. issues related to the well-being and dignity of humankind and people, and organisations behaving morally in their own use of I.T. The former includes issues such as transhumanism, nanotechnology, genetic engineering and the patenting of life-forms, and the latter includes issues such as plagiarism, netiquette and computer crime.

Kallman and Grillo consider computer ethics and individual responsibility, arguing that:

> *An individual who uses a computer, whether on the job or for personal use, has the responsibility to use it ethically* (Kallman and Grillo, 1996, p.25).

They say that individuals should take responsibility in a number of key areas, such as protecting passwords and not leaving confidential information unattended on the screen. Clearly, there are differences between how individuals could and should behave ethically in I.T. matters, compared with how organisations could and should behave. Furthermore, different legislation applies. Legislation for copyright for individual creators of works is different from copyright legislation for organisations, for example.

The wider ethical issues in relation to I.T. consider the implications of I.T. for society in general. If those designing complex I.T. systems (such as nanotechnology) do not pay sufficient heed to

certain ethical/moral issues, then this could have very serious consequences for society and, indeed, for human kind in general. This is considered, in particular, in the nanotechnology section of this article. Bill Joy suggests that if we do not heed to moral principles then nanotechnology could begin to destroy humankind.

3.2   Types of ethical issues in I.T.

There are a great variety of ethical issues in I.T. that need to be considered, and some of the different types will be considered in this section.

3.2.1 Ethical dilemmas

There are various ethical dilemmas in relation to I.T. that need to be addressed. What are and are not ethical issues in I.T.? In regard to hackers, for example, are they testing the system or performing an immoral action? Will genetic engineering improve the quality of peoples' lives or start to destroy it? How do we recognise when an ethical dilemma exists? There are, indeed, many grey ethical areas.

3.2.2 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is where the work of others is copied, but the author presents it as his or her own work. This is a highly unethical practice, but happens quite frequently, and with all the information that is now available on the Internet it is much easier to do and is happening more often. As Bowyer states:

> *Plagiarism is the taking of the ideas, writings, drawings, words, or other similar intellectual property created by others and presenting it as your own. It is generally not a legal issue, like copyright infringement, but it is an ethical one. For example, you can reuse writings in the public   domain without worrying about the legal problem of infringing a copyright, but presenting them as your own without proper credit to their true origin is an act of plagiarism. And plagiarism is unethical* (Bowyer, 2001, p.267).

Bowyer also refers to 'self-plagiarism', whereby the author reuses his/her own words from a previous publication in a newer publication without referencing the older publication. There are software packages that operate to detect plagiarism from the Internet, but it would be highly beneficial if more work was undertaken in this area.

3.2.3 Piracy

Piracy, the illegal copying of software, is a very serious problem, and it is estimated that approximately 50% of all programs on PCs are pirated copies. Programmers spend hours and hours designing programs, using elaborate code, and surely need to be protected. Although some might argue that some pirating at least should be permitted as it can help to lead to a more computer literate population. But, for corporations, in particular, this is a very serious issue, and can significantly damage profit margins.

3.2.4 Hacking

Hackers break into, or 'hack' into a system. Hacking can be undertaken for a variety of reasons, such as the wish to damage a system or the wish to understand how a system works, so that money can be made out of it. Alternatively, there might be a desire to alert people to the fact that a system is insecure and needs improving. Due to this some argue that there are 'hacker ethics'. Mikkkeee (und.) says that:

> The ethics behind hacking and the actions taken by hackers constitute a philosophical manifesto that transcends our understanding of the art (Mikkkeee, und. p.1).

Hacking can present a moral dilemma. This is because 'reformed hackers' sometimes offer their expertise to help organisations protect themselves against other hackers. Hackers cannot just wander into a system, as they could into an unlocked door. Instead, it requires a lot of skill. With this skill hackers can demonstrate that a system is insecure and needs improving. In this way, it could be argued that hackers play a valuable role. However, many such as Mikkkeee, argue that hacking might lead to some improvements, but that it causes such a lot of disruption that it is not worth it in the long-run. Mikkkeee suggests that there should be a National Data Protection Commission to monitor information, propose legislation and monitor abuse.

3.2.5 Computer crime

Many different computer crimes are committed, which clearly poses ethical questions for society. Various illegal acts are performed on computers, such as fraud and embezzlement. This includes, for example, using imaging and desktop publishing to create, copy or alter official documents and graphic images. There are also various

ethical dilemmas, such as whether copying such files is as bad as stealing something.

3.2.6 Viruses

Clearly writing and spreading virus programs are unethical acts, they have very serious consequences, and cause systems to crash and organisations to cease operating for certain periods. One of the most concerning consequences of such actions is when viruses interrupt the smooth functioning of an organisation such as a hospital, which could in extreme cases even cause people to die. Logic bombs are also sometimes planted.

There is obviously a lot of anti-virus software on the market now though that helps to deal with this ever-growing problem.

3.2.7 Ergonomics/health issues

There are many ergonomic/health issues related to I.T. Responsible/ethically-minded employers will, hopefully, give due consideration to this, as indeed should all employers. This includes issues such as the importance of taking adequate breaks from using the computer and ensuring that the screens comply with the regulations. Also, ensuring that the positioning of the chair and the computer is appropriate for the user and providing foot rests, when required. Some organisations will give special advice to their employees on these matters. When I worked at Clifford Chance, an international law company, for example, they had specialised staff who would come round to each employee individually, and discuss their ergonomic needs, if the employee requested this. Having enough light and having plants in the room can also be important factors. As Kallman and Grillo say:

> Ergonomics is concerned with the physical work environment. The question is, how far should an organization go to be "ergonomically sound"? For example, what is required to provide data entry clerks with a healthful work area? How can a firm create an environment that results in minimal eyestrain, guards against back problems, prevents repetitive-motion syndrome, and protects against exposure to possibly harmful CRT (cathode-ray tube) emissions? (Kallman and Grillo, 1996, p.27).

Without such ethical/moral awareness and taking the necessary action, many workers will suffer health problems directly from I.T., such as back problems, eyestrain and eye infections and repetitive strain injury (RSI).

3.2.8 Job displacement/work pressures imposed on computer professionals

Computers are changing the face of the work scene. For some people, their jobs are becoming redundant or they have to play quite different roles, and others are suffering increasing levels of stress from work pressures. Others are, obviously, reaping the benefits of having more rewarding jobs, and there is certainly more emphasis on knowledge, information and I.T. skills than ever before. However, this all clearly poses various ethical issues. Should those that lose their jobs be compensated? How can the pressure be eased on those that are suffering stress? Is it acceptable for computer programmers to be made redundant 'on the spot' etc? There are many ethical issues that need to be addressed here.

3.2.9 Digital divide

The digital divide poses a serious problem today. A new breed of 'haves' and 'have nots' are being created, between those that have access and can use a computer and the Internet, and those that do not have such access. There are clearly serious ethical implications here. Those that do not have such access may well be discriminated against, feel 'socially excluded' and miss out on many life opportunities. As Lynch says:

> One of the major issues in electronic networks is the question of access: who will have access to the networks, and what kind of information will be accessible. These questions are important because networks offer tremendous economic, political, and even social advantages to people who have access to them. As the networks become a larger presence in society, conflicts may arise between information "haves" and "have-nots". Conceivably, network communication could create greater equality by offering common access to all resources for all citizens. Already, in a few places scattered around the country, experiments with "freenets", network connections established through local libraries or other municipal or local organizations specifically for people who otherwise would have no way to use the networks, have shown that those people will, for instance, participate more in local government issues. They therefore have a greater voice in whatever happens with a local government. Conversely, if access is not evenly distributed, it threatens to perpetuate or deepen existing divides between the poor, who cannot afford expensive computer systems, and the better-off (Lynch, 2000, p.9).

This is all very concerning. However, there will always be inequalities in some shape of form, whilst we live in global capitalism, I would suggest. There will be both absolute and relative

poverty; absolute poverty being the state of poverty that people are in where they lack the basic means for survival, such as food and shelter, and relative poverty being where some members of a society are poor relative to other members. Clearly, the digital divide is an example of relative poverty.

3.2.10 Gender

There are also ethical issues in regard to gender and computers, given the fact that females are often discriminated against in various ways in this new I.T. age. As I emphasised in my article *Females, computer and libraries:*

> *The computing world is very male-dominated…For various reasons, such as early socialisation, the male-dominated computer environment, and an apparent lack of confidence, females tend to focus on the softer subjects. They either do not study and move into areas such as computing, mathematics and engineering at all, or if they do many subsequently become discouraged and disillusioned and leave. Males dominate the computing world and even more disturbingly the numbers of women going into IT are falling* (Rikowski, 2003, p.6).

Furthermore, Butcher notes the fact that:

> *Only around 5% of young women consider the IT industry for a career; with most perceiving it as nerdy, even though girls who pick IT often excel* (Butcher, 2003, p.6).

Also, the number of females in computing academia is low. Wade, reporting in *The Guardian*, says that:

> *Computing degrees are notoriously male-dominated; nationally there is an average of only 21% of women registered on them* (Wade, 2001, p.15).

Margolis and Fisher consider early socialisation both at home and school, emphasising that:

> *Childhood behaviours, however conditioned by gender socialization and genetics, tend to set computing on the male side of the gender divide* (Margolis and Fisher, 2002, p.32).

Margolis and Fisher undertook some detailed research into women and computing. They conducted over 230 interviews with over 100 male and female computer science students, during a four-year period (from 1995-1999) at Carnegie Mellon University. In this research they consider the fact that women's confidence in computing is often undermined. They refer to one participant, Carmela, for example, who started programming when she was

about 5 years old. Carmela found that comments made by her male classmates overwhelmed her and undermined her confidence. She said:

> Then I got here and just felt so incredibly overwhelmed by the other people in the program (mostly guys, yes) that I began to lose interest in coding because really, whenever I sat down to program there would be tons of people around going, "My God, this is so easy. Why have you been working on it for two days, when I finished in five hours? (p.79).

Furthermore, when females do work closely with computers, it is often in the lower-level of work. As Wilding said:

> Why are women a tiny percentage of computer programmers, software designers, systems analysts, and hackers, while they are the majority of teletypers, chip-assemblers, and installers, and low skilled tele-operators that keep the global data and infobanks operating? (Wilding, und., p.2).

Also, computer screens and layouts are frequently designed and programmed by men, and they might not be ideally suited to women, which could affect the quality of the work that women produce.

All this clearly has serious repercussions for society. Certain aspects of the digital divide will not only apply to the 'haves' and the 'have nots', but also to males and females. Furthermore, men tend to obtain the better quality I.T. jobs, earn more money, and make far more of the important decisions in relation to I.T. Basically, men are driving the I.T. age forward, whereas females are playing more passive roles, confined to working with the systems that men have already created, but which might not be ideally suited to them. These are all ethical issues that people should be made more aware of, and efforts need to be made to try to remedy the situation.

3.2.11   Nanotechnology

Nanotechnology presents a new set of ethical dilemmas. Colvin says:

> For the past decade, nanotechnologists have basked in the glow of positive public opinion. We've wowed the public with our ability to manipulate matter at the atomic level and with grand visions of how we might use this ability. All this 'good news' has created a growing perception among business and government leaders that nanotechnology is a powerful platform for twenty-first technologies (Colvin, 2002, p.1).

Nanotechnology could help humankind and help to provide adequate food and shelter. On the other hand, it could be very

dangerous. There are also various environmental issues to consider, such as the effect that nanomaterials have on living systems. There is a relatively low investment in environmental nanotechnology, which must surely give us cause for concern.

Bill Joy considers nanotechnology issues in some depth. Joy has worked with computer networking for over 25 years and has written computer programs such as the Unix utilities and the Vi text editor on Unix. He says in regard to ethics:

> *I believe we all wish our course could be determined by our collective values, ethics and morals* (Joy, 2000, p.256).

However, he speaks about nanotechnology saying that:

> *…it is far easier to create destructive uses for nanotechnology than constructive ones* (Joy, 2000, p.246).

Furthermore:

> *…we have the possibility not just of weapons of mass destruction but of knowledge-enabled mass destruction (KMD), this destructiveness hugely amplified by the power of self-replication. I think it is no exaggeration to say that we are on the cusp of the further perfection of extreme evil, an evil whose possibility will spread well beyond that which weapons of mass destruction bequeathed to the nation-states, on to a surprising and terrible empowerment of extreme individuals* (Joy, 2000, p.9).

He concludes by saying that:

> *I have always believed that making software more reliable, given its many users, will make the world a safer and better place; if I were to come to believe the opposite, then I would be morally obliged to stop this work. I can now imagine such a day may come* (Joy, 2000, p.262).

Thus, these are all very serious ethical issues that need to be confronted sooner rather than later. If it appears to be the case that advanced aspects of I.T. are seriously threatening our way of life, then something surely needs to be done about it as soon as possible.

3.2.12   Expert systems

Expert systems are a body of information in a specific field that is held in an electronic format, such as a 'doctor expert system', that houses detailed medical information on a database. Various questions can be posed in regard to expert systems, such as what is the basis of ownership? Is it the different elements that comprise

the total system or the total package? These issues are related to intellectual property rights and the moral aspects in regard to this. Belohlav, Drehemer and Raho (und.) report on a survey of information system professionals that was undertaken, which examined the perceptions of these professionals on the development and use of expert systems business organisations. The population that was examined was the membership of the Data Processing Management Association (DPMA), and 499 usable questionnaires were returned. The DPMA is the largest general computing association in the United States. The survey examined how knowledge of an expert system was developed. Respondents said that individual experts in an organisation should be informed about their participation, but that they should not necessarily be forced to participate in creating an existing system. Furthermore, they said that they were not the owners of the end product. Thus, the respondents had clear opinions about their moral rights in relation to the use of their intellectual property for expert systems, although also:

> *The results indicate that no uniform ethical perspective dominates the perceptions of the respondents in assessing expert system applications* (Belohlav, Drehmer and Raho, und., p.1).

This, perhaps, helps to illustrate the complexity of ethical issues here.

There are also wider ethical issues in regard to expert systems that need to be explored. In regard to a 'doctor expert system', for example, such a system can provide accurate information, but the face-to-face contact is missing. Such face-to-face contact might prove to be essential in order to ensure that the right diagnosis is made, and it is possible that some individuals could even die as a result of a wrong diagnosis given through this lack of face-to-face contact. In other ways expert systems could help to save lives. The patient might, for example, be given a speedier response. All these ethical issues need to be considered further.

3.2.13   Genetic engineering and the patenting of life-forms

Many ethical issues are raised in regard to genetic engineering and the patenting of life-forms. Is such behaviour morally acceptable? Such debates can sit alongside debates on subjects such as euthanasia and abortion.

3.2.14   Netiquette

There are also ethical/moral codes that should be adhered to, in the use of networks and email correspondence. As already indicated, the setting up of such codes has become necessary as people have not always addressed each other in an appropriate manner through this means of communication, and in this way they have behaved unethically. As pointed out by Margaret Lynch (1994) guidelines for 'on-line civil behaviour' include, for example, not wasting peoples' time and not taking up network storage with large files. Furthermore, not looking at other peoples' files or using other systems without permission and not using capital letters, as this denotes shouting (unless one does actually want to shout at someone through email!). Also, people that become too obnoxious can be banned or ignored. A 'kill file' can be set-up which will automatically erases messages from that person.

3.2.15   Intellectual property rights: the moral rights

There are moral rights embedded within much intellectual property rights legislation, agreements and directives, for the benefit of creators of works and copyright holders. Furthermore, there are penalties for those that violate such legislation, (such as violating copyright legislation), although this can sometimes be difficult to enforce in practice. The legislation, though, is often complex and difficult to understand, which means that some creators of works do not obtain the moral rights that they are entitled to. However, sometimes, moral rights are actually excluded from agreements. This applies to the World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) (1995), in relation to copyright. As the WTO says:

> *...Members do not have rights or obligations under the TRIPS Agreement in respect of the rights conferred under Article 6Bis of that Convention, i.e. the moral rights (the right to claim authorship and to object to any derogatory action in relation to a work, which would be prejudicial to the author's honour or reputation), or of the rights derived there from* (WTO, und., p.4).

The Berne Convention is over 100 years old, and deals with copyright issues in great depth. All of the Berne Convention has been incorporated into TRIPS, apart from the moral rights. This should surely give us cause for concern.

3.2.16   Issues of data collection, storage and access

There are many moral issues that need to be considered in regard to the collection, storage and access of data in electronic form. Under what circumstances, for example, should one seek permission from or inform those whose records are on file? Furthermore, how accurate is the data and who has access to it?

3.2.17   Speed of computers

The pure speed at which computers operate can cause ethical problems in themselves. It can allow people to perform unethical issues quickly, or perform operations that it was difficult or impossible to perform before, such as browsing through files that one is not authorised to. It can also mean that people do not give enough consideration before performing various actions.

3.2.18   Vendor-client issues

Ethical issues also arise in regard to vendor-client relationships, the vendor being the computer supplier and the client being the person that is buying the computer system, whether this be the hardware or software or both. If the user continually changes the system specification, for example, to what extent should the vendor be prepared to adjust the system specification accordingly? Other unethical acts include, for example, consultants selling the program to the second client, after being paid to develop the program for the first client only. Also, the vendor might provide hardware maintenance according to a written contract and for hardware to be repaired in a 'timely manner', but the client might not believe that the repairs have been timely. Drawing up more precise contracts might help here, but in some instances the outcome can probably only depend on peoples' individual moral consciences.

3.2.19   Conclusions

Thus, there is a vast range of ethical issues in I.T., and some of these have been discussed in this article. These can be broken down into a number of sub-headings, including computer crime, social implications, advanced I.T. issues, netiquette and intellectual property rights. Some of these can be solved quite easily, whilst others seem to be almost impossible to solve. Kallman and Grillo say that in order to create an ethical computing environment we

need to establish rules of conduct. Referring to ethical issues in I.T. in general, they say:

> Because computers permeate our work and personal lives, all of us have an obligation to see that they are used responsibly. The factors that characterize ethical dilemmas in a computer environment include the speed of a computer, vulnerability of computer data to unauthoized
> change, and the fact that protecting information often decreases its accessibility. Because of the effort effect, harmless situations may turn into harmful ones without our realizing it (Kallman and Grillo, 1996, p.31).

There is much food for thought and a lot of work that needs to be done, if we are to meaningfully address some of these issues. Not addressing some of these issues (such as computer viruses) is not an option anyway, if we want to continue to live in an I.T. age (which seems inevitable anyway) – we cannot have viruses causing our I.T. systems to continually crash.

4.   How to teach ethical issues in I.T. – different teaching methods

4.1   Introduction

Clearly, teaching ethical issues in I.T. is important, and there are many different ways in which these issues can be taught. This section will consider some of these methods. Doris Lidtke says:

> Teaching social and ethical issues in computing seems to have become a requirement in computer science curricula within the past few years…only a few within the profession have been concerned with the issues of computing and values, and only within the past few years has there been some consensus about the need for every undergraduate student to acquire some understanding of the professional and ethical standards of the field (Lidtke, und., p.1).

Furthermore, Computer Learning Month 1990 Contests said that:

> Ensuring our children develop positive values and a sense of ethical and responsible use of technology is our responsibility as adults (Computer Learning Month Contests, 1990).

Following on from this, they ran a Computer Learning Month 1990 Contest, to examine this further, and some of the teaching methods that they used are considered below.

4.2 Different teaching methods for teaching ethical issues in I.T.

4.2.1.1 Lectures and seminars

Lectures and seminars are obviously the standard traditional teaching methods in universities, and they are, indeed, valuable teaching methods. The importance of them should not be undermined, simply because they are traditional methods that are being used in a non-traditional subject area.

4.2.1.2 Online collaborative tools

There are various online collaborative tools on the market, such as Blackboard. They are useful because they provide opportunities for groups to debate issues online. This is particularly important in a subject such as ethical issues in I.T., on topics such as plagiarism and the digital divide, as well as a means for storing information and documents, such as discussion documents on 'work in progress' obtaining lecture notes.

4.2.1.3 Worksheets

This is another traditional method. Students can be asked to complete questions on worksheets. Students can also be broken up into groups, and the questions on the worksheet can then be discussed further, followed by fed-back sessions.

4.2.1.4 Storybooks

Storybooks can be a very good teaching method for primary school children. Suzy Bagley of Kaley Elementary School in Orlando, Florida, for example, (see Computer Learning Month 1990 Contests) ties the teaching of computer ethics to themes of pirates and Captain Hook. This can help to make the message real.

4.2.5 Role playing

Role playing can be very useful as it helps to make situations seem real. Students can act out court procedures regarding some ethical issues in I.T., for example, such as the pirating of software. Participants can play different roles, such as judge, prosecutor and defender and act out the court scene.

4.2.6.1   Classroom discussions
Classroom discussions can be invaluable, if structured properly. As those writing up the Computer Learning Month 1990 Contests said:

> *Class discussions are important in most strategies for teaching children computer ethics, as students have the opportunity to discover and better understand all sides of ethical issues and develop their own values* (Computer Learning Month Contests, 1990, p.2).

Specific topics could be debated, such as the digital divide, gender and I.T. issues and hacking.

4.2.6.2   Brainstorming sessions
Brainstorming is another very popular, tried and trusted teaching method. Students can be given a question or a theme, which can then be discussed in groups and then fed back to the whole group. Sometimes, the main ideas can be written up on flipchart paper in various ways, such as by using a simple point system, mind maps and/or diagrams. Students could discuss, for example whether it is ever acceptable to hack into a system.

4.2.6.3   Use real-life examples
Using real examples is wonderful if there is the opportunity to do this. This could include, for example, examining an anti-virus package; isolating a virus and examining how and what damage it can create; observing real work situations where I.T. staff are suffering stress; examining the ergonomic environment of staff working with I.T. and considering some real examples of plagiarism.

4.2.6.4   News stories
Students can research and discuss news stories on computer crime. David Heath, Friends School of Baltimore, Maryland (see Computer Learning Month 1990 Contests) suggested that students list the pros and cons of pirating software, discuss which facts they would be comfortable with other organisations having about them and whether information should be available for sale to others.

4.2.6.5   Developing billboards/posters
Billboards and posters can be used to communicate ethical messages and standards to other students. Jeanine DeLay from Greenhills School in Ann Arbor, Michigan, used this method effectively (see Computer Learning Month 1990 Contests).

4.2.6.6 Conduct surveys

Students can conduct surveys to establish, for example, other students' attitudes about computer ethic issues. Jeanine DeLay also used this method (see Computer Learning Month 1990 Contests). Larger surveys could also be undertaken, and questions could be asked to the wider population. This could be undertaken as part of a research methods course, for example, and/or as part of a dissertation.

4.2.6.7 Speakers

Guest speakers can be invited along, to speak about various ethical issues in I.T. These could include writers, I.T. experts and academics. This could be followed by a discussion.

4.2.6.8 Discuss consequences of computer crimes

Students could, for example, review software licence agreements and discuss this. This can help students to understand the law and variations in policies across companies. Margaret Synder from All Saints Catholic, Pottsville, Pennsylvania undertook this method (see Computer Learning Months 1990 Contests).

4.2.6.9 Musicals

Computer ethics could be explored through a musical. Indeed, the musical that is currently showing in the West End, 'We will rock you' which is written by Ben Elton, and features the music of the group Queen, considers the ethical issues in relation to music being downloaded from the Internet. In this futuristic world, there is no place for musical composers and musical instruments. Only music that is downloaded from the Internet is acceptable. The musical focuses on the 'deviants' who would not comply with this, and tried to create their own music. These are serious issues here that need to be considered further. Will the downloading of music from the Internet stifle musical creativity and what are the likely consequences of this for humankind?

Louise Kann, (see Computer Learning Month 1990 Contest), looked at computer ethics through a short musical. Characters in the musical included 'Computerbug', a character that added bugs to software programs and 'Bender' who bends and takes discs from the disk drive when the 'busy' light is on.

4.2.6.10 Inputting information on to a database

Students could input their personal details into a database as an experiment. The teacher could then make changes to the information and have a discussion around how students feel about

having their personal information tampered with in this way. Robbi Ray used this method (see Computer Learning Month 1990 Contest).

4.2.6.11   Book, journal articles and newspapers and I.T. information sources, such as ejournals, the Internet, websites and weblogs

Books, journal articles and newspapers as well as the various I.T. information sources all provide rich sources of information, which can be used to find out more details about some of the various ethical issues in I.T.

4.2.6.12   Conclusion

There are many different ways in which ethical issues in I.T. can be taught, and some of these methods have been explored in this article. However, consideration also needs to be given in regard to which are the best methods to use, both in an ideal situation, and in reality. By this I mean that one of the best methods to use in an ideal situation would probably be the use of real-life examples. However, this might be difficult to achieve in practice – there might be a lack of resources and/or it might not be feasible to arrange. Making the necessary arrangements for students to observe a real work situation of I.T. staff working in a stressful environment, for example, might actually be quite difficult to achieve. Furthermore, some methods will be more appropriate for one particular group of students, whilst other methods will be more appropriate for another group. The musical method, for example, might be ideal for drama and music students, but quite inappropriate for students studying chemistry. Other examples are more likely to appeal to all students and to be feasible. This would include the more traditional teaching methods, such as lectures, seminars and classroom discussions. Other methods can be used in longer-term projects, such as conducting a detailed survey as part of a research qualification.

5.   When to teach ethical issues in I.T.

When should people first be introduced and made aware of ethical issues in I.T? Given the importance of I.T. today, it should probably be introduced in the primary school. Obviously, the type of subject areas to include would have to be considered carefully, to ensure that they would be suitable and that most children would be able to understand it. It could include information about piracy and

plagiarism, for example, as these are topics that children are likely to come into contact with early on and to be affected by. At the other end of the age spectrum, we can ask whether elderly people should be made aware of and taught these issues? Some elderly people are not very familiar with computers at all, but should this be allowed to hold back those that are forward-looking and enthusiastic, and use computers, and might benefit from being made more aware about these ethical I.T. issues? If such courses are run for the elderly it then has to be decided when and where such courses are to be held.

In regard to university, there are various issues to consider here. Clearly, a variety of ethical issues in I.T. need to be taught at university. But when should they be taught? Whilst some ethical issues in I.T. need to be taught on all courses, others are more specialist. Issues around plagiarism need be taught on all courses, and should be emphasised and reinforced at various points on the course, I would suggest, such as at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of a course. Other topics should be taught as part of a unit on a course - whether that is an undergraduate or a postgraduate course. Job displacement could form part of an Industrial Relations unit, for example. Whereas other subjects could be units in their own rights. In general, subjects such as nanotechnology and expert systems could be taught on specialist I.T. courses and subjects such as the digital divide, ergonomics and job displacement could be taught on social science courses (either as a part of a unit or as units in their own rights). Decisions also have to be made in regard to **when** to teach these ethical issues in I.T. – whether towards the beginning, middle or end of a course/unit; what time of the day, such as morning, afternoon or evening; and the length of the teaching, such as one hour, or two hours, within a session.

Some ethical I.T. issues need to be taught in the work-place. Topics here could include, for example, hacking, ergonomics and viruses. Ethical issues in I.T. can also be taught in various other institutions, such as colleges and community centres. It could also be undertaken through e-learning and various online facilities, such as through websites, email lists and online collaborative tools.

Several issues need to be considered for all courses. These include: what subjects to cover; when to have sessions; how long the sessions should be; what level to teach at; whether to teach in-house and/or have external I.T. trainers and what documentation to provide.

In the future, the teaching of ethics in I.T. is likely to become even more important.

6.   Conclusions

The I.T. age has presented us with a new set of ethical dilemmas. As Lynch says:

> *New computer technologies for gathering, storing, manipulating, and communicating data are revolutionizing the use and spread of information. Along the way, they are also creating ethical dilemmas. The speed and efficiency of electronic information systems, which include local and global networks, databases, and programs for processing information, force people to confront entirely new rights and responsibilities in their use of information and to reconsider standards of conduct shaped before the advent of computers* (Lynch, 2000, p.1).

This article has examined some of the different ethical issues in I.T. and how they can be taught effectively. The various ethical issues can be broken down into various sub-categories, such as social issues, computer crime, intellectual property rights and advanced I.T. issues. When teaching ethical issues in I.T. a number of factors need to be considered. These include: which ethical issues in I.T. to teach and how to teach these issues – which teaching methods to use. Also, what level to teach at; how much time to allocate to these teaching/training sessions; what types of material to use; whether and to what extent real-life situations should be explored; when it should be taught and where it should be taught, such as primary school, college, university and the work place.

These ethical I.T. issues are not going to disappear, so they need to be explored and tackled, although some of them might, in essence, be irresolvable, especially whilst we live in capitalism. The main aim of computer companies, for example, is to make a profit, and this might, and indeed often does, conflict with the needs of the clients that have bought the software and hardware and expect a good level of support. Continually upgrading products is often not in the customers' interest, even though computer companies will try to persuade its customers that it is. Such companies are in the business of creating wants and needs for people – sometimes creating wants and needs that they never knew they had! As Dodson, writing in *The Guardian*, said:

> *Around once every two years most major UK companies upgrade their office software. Perfectly good programmes are thrown out, to be replaced with newer versions, all in the hope that faster, more reliable software will speed up the time it takes to do office tasks. But like the myth of the paperless office, will this promise ever be realised? Or are*

> *software upgrades more trouble than they are worth? … Ultimately,*
> *the real fear is that software packages lead to de-skilling* (Dodson,
> 2000, p.5).

Richard Reeves also makes the point that:

> *Capitalism stands accused of many crimes, but its capacity to keep*
> *creating demand, which people have to be employed to meet, seems*
> *limitless* (Reeves, 2001, p.11).

So, this conflict might mean that companies do not, in reality, give enough consideration to the ethical issues in I.T., as the drive to create new products and upgrade products, thereby raising the profit margin, takes precedence over moral considerations. Some of the ethical issues in I.T. are being tackled more effectively though (although there is obviously always room for improvement). Great efforts are being made in regard to finding ways to deal with viruses, for example, and more and more attention is now being given to ergonomic and health issues.

Also, though, whilst it is useful to be aware of the ethical dilemmas/problems, time can undoubtedly be wasted if too much attention is given to trying to solve some of them. One example here is the digital divide. Whilst we live in global capitalism, there will always be inequalities, I would suggest. So, now that we live in an I.T. age, there will always be some people that have greater accessibility to computers than others. We can attempt to make this somewhat fairer, by having more computers available in public libraries, for example, and enabling the public to search on the Internet for free, but the problem cannot be solved in a total way. In order to solve the problem on a lasting basis, we need to look beyond capitalism.

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Critical Perspectives in E-learning

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E-learning in the UK post-statutory education sector

In recent years, the post-statutory UK education sectors have seen dramatic change in policy and focus, largely driven by the education policies of the New Labour government elected in 1997. This government's vision for education has cited a combination of widening access to post-statutory education and training and use of emerging technologies to achieve these aims. Reports such as the *Dearing Report* (1997), *The Learning Age* (1998) and *21st Century Skills Realising Our Potential* (2003) presented both industry and the education sectors with a number of goals focused on improving educational standards as a vehicle to strengthen the UK economy. The aims of this legislation can be summarised in the following extract from *21st Century Skills*:

There are four principles underlying our approach to improved publicly-funded training provision for adults. It should:

- Be led by the needs of employers and learners.
- Be shaped by the skill needs prioritised in each sector, region and locality.
- Make the best use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to deliver and assess learning.
- Give colleges and training providers maximum discretion to decide how best to respond to needs … (p. 87)

These reports emphasised the importance of a demand-led approach within the education sectors and the development of links between education providers and industry – prompting a debate on the role of colleges and universities in the wider economy and implications for subject areas within a market-led approach to educational funding. Gibson, Newton and Dixon (1999) comment on this emerging agenda:

…sub-degree level courses and flexible structures of certification have become more common. Access to lifelong learning has increasingly been seen by policymakers at all levels as a social and economic priority.

Occurring around the same time as the New Labour educational policies, we have seen an acceleration in the role of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the life of post-statutory education institutions, including online library catalogues (OPACs), online journals and many more technologies that have become commonplace in educational life. The growth of the World Wide Web from the mid 1990s as an information and communications medium has seen the Web browser, typified by Microsoft Internet Explorer emerge as an almost universal gateway to digital content, arguably providing a popular and usable interface to the Internet. Additionally, increased adoption of the World Wide Web by home users has allowed this medium to deliver off-site access to many university systems.

Of course, ubiquitous access to educational systems is really an ideal, relying on a range of factors for success, including suitable internet/network access, IT literacy amongst the user base and effective systems themselves to name a few.

In addition to the general emergence of ICT and networked information systems in the education sectors, there have been significant developments regarding learning systems themselves. Early attempts at publishing Web based educational material included use of 'static' HTML pages authored using programs such as FrontPage, but this approach amongst academic staff has been largely replaced by use of the VLE or Virtual Learning Environment, a typically Web-based system which allows lecturers and other staff to upload documents and use communication tools without the need for technical knowledge. The prevalence of VLEs since the late 1990s has been accompanied and arguably exacerbated by government advocacy and widespread commentary within the IT, education, library and associated sectors; the emergence of the VLE has also seen a proliferation of terms such as 'e-learning', 'online learning' and 'networked learning' to designate study in a networked digital environment. Additionally, terms such as 'blended' or 'distributed learning' have been used to convey a combined use of traditional class-based teaching alongside e-learning systems. Market leaders amongst VLE software developers include Blackboard, Web CT, Learnwise and Firstclass, with the Blackboard system having the greatest share of the market with perhaps 70% of the post-statutory education market in 2006 (especially following its recent merger with Web CT). Additionally, a large number of open-source and not-for-profit VLE systems have emerged to compete with the big corporate developers, including Moodle and Bodington.

The role e-learning plays in expanding the distance learning market and delivery of overseas courses has been the subject of much recent debate, offering a range of communication tools and content publishing features to facilitate Web-based interaction and content dissemination for low-contact and distance learning students.

Thus, it can be seen that the VLE model of e-learning has been widely adopted across academic institutions, exacerbating the growth of the e-learning software industry and emergence of a new class of e-learning practitioners and technical experts to support this new medium. As a consequence of the rise of e-learning and VLEs, many educationalists have begun to seriously question what has become a moot feature of educational practice.

Critical perspective 1: the digital divide

The widespread adoption of e-learning and VLEs has largely been driven by the recommendations of educational technologists seeking to convey the benefits of e-learning as a valuable accessory to teaching and possible solution for distance-based education. It is often proffered that e-learning can offer solutions to the communication and content-delivery problems associated with part-time and distance-based teaching, in addition to providing repository-style resources and enhanced communication for traditional class-based tuition. However, it is important to consider the wide breadth of determinants in delivering an e-learning system from an operational perspective, including factors such as systems integrity and functionality, usability issues for students, staff and system administrators, organisational issues such as user access to resources, the training and support needs of students and staff and integration with other systems. Additionally, there are also academic determinants, including the organisation of learning resources, appropriate use of communication tools for tutor and student interaction, the design of educational resources themselves and academic support issues in a distance learning context.

From the perspective of staff and students confronted with the use of e-learning systems, we might consider the rising levels of ICT literacy and home internet use widely reported in the media. However, not all students, entering Further or Higher education will be school leavers, nor can it be assumed they are Internet users.

The recent marketing and policy campaigns of the New Labour government have sought to increase participation in education at all levels, with increased spending in Further Education for participation from non-traditional entrants, including work-based schemes such

as Learn Direct and the University for Industry. Universities have also been encouraged to adopt an inclusive approach to student recruitment, i.e. mature, disabled and ethnic minority entrants and individuals from backgrounds where university participation is uncommon. Recent statistics suggest an increase in the number of entrants matching these profiles, suggesting a trend towards mature, part-time study:

> 1,236,300 (66%) of all enrolments are full-time, an increase in numbers of 3% since 2000/01. The number of part-time enrolments also grew by 3% over the same period. (Office of National Statistics, 2003).

The demands on institutions to facilitate low-contact study are particularly pertinent in these circumstances and e-learning systems are often cited as a solution for this emerging trend in educational provision. However, we should consider the ICT literacy of this wider student context and the appropriateness of the VLE to facilitate these student profiles, many of whom may not have a prior knowledge of IT or the World Wide Web in their private or vocational lives. Cullen (2001) echoes this:

> Where people in business or professional occupations acquire skills as part of their employment, manual workers and the unemployed are less likely to be exposed to such opportunities. Young people who do not go on to any form of tertiary education are equally disadvantaged (p.314).

Additionally, the VLE does rely on internet access and this is still not universally available to all members of the public. Despite the impact of the People's Network on public libraries, many individuals such as the disabled or elderly may be unable to use Web based resources for accessibility reasons. Additionally international students from developing countries may have no experience of Web browser software. It should also not be assumed that all school-leavers will be comfortable studying through the medium of the Web, with class-based instruction still the prevalent form of teaching in statutory education. Cullen (2001) comments:

> A number of research and policy papers addressing the issue of the digital divide identify specific groups of people as being especially disadvantaged in their uptake of ICTs. These include: people on low incomes, people with few educational qualifications or with low literacy levels, the unemployed, elderly people, people in isolated or rural areas, people with disabilities, sole parents, women and girls. Because they are often already disadvantaged in terms of education, income and health status… (p.312).

It can therefore be seen that reliance on ICT skills in an increasingly diverse student population raises a number of usability and accessibility concerns for the adoption of e-learning systems. Whilst

the VLE offers a substantially less complex interface to information than say, older UNIX or Terminal based systems, there are still fundamental issues related to computing culture and usage across the spectrum of potential college and university participants.

Critical perspective 2: the standards debate

E-learning systems, particularly VLEs are the product of a new and growing industry based around the education, training and business sectors. The development of e-learning systems has been traditionally seen in context to other proprietary commercial software, with system-specific formats and data which functioned only within the host system. However, common standards within VLE systems have recently emerged (e.g. SCORM, IMS), largely under the coordination of CETIS (Centre For Educational Technology Interoperability Standards). These standards are intended to allow for the development of 'learning objects', stand-alone educational resources which can be developed and re-used within a range of compatible software applications, VLEs etc.

The development of transferable learning objects for VLEs and other systems has given credibility to the efforts of the e-learning industry at developing a more open framework, encouraging the sharing of learning objects and development of resource repositories across academic institutions. However, in reality, the development of these standards has been problematic, with limited inter-compatibility of standards-based objects within some VLEs and reliance on often complex XML-based applications to create learning resources.

There are also concerns that the learning object concept is simply an excuse to develop another layer of commercial activity on top of the VLE, with learning objects for sale from VLE vendors and third party companies. Furthermore, this approach to e-learning has prompted some academic staff to contemplate a tutor-less future for education, where courses are composed of stock learning objects, delivered via the VLE to distance learners with minimal staffing overheads.

Another issue of concern for many educationalists is the lack of interoperability between distinct VLE systems, where most systems are still designed in a proprietary context, lacking the ability to download a specific module or online course and re-use this data in an alternative VLE. This aspect has led to the accusation that institutions are locking themselves into a perpetual contract with VLE developers/suppliers with increasing dependence on the VLE

company's support and maintenance. More recently, the biggest VLE company, Blackboard has been accused of creating a monopoly in the e-learning software industry by patenting aspects of its systems and taking legal action against a rival company, Desire2Learn.

Clearly, the issues of poor interoperability and compatibility between VLE systems is a problem for the re-use of educational content, limiting the ability of academic staff to export content between systems. The dependence of institutions on proprietary VLE systems also indicates a decline in ownership and control of the educational process by institutions themselves and emergence of the VLE companies as major stakeholders in the educational sector.

Critical perspective 3: academic objections to e-learning

The profession of teaching has evolved from ancient times (e.g. the classical Greek schools of dialectics), and is informed by a vast body of literature in theory, research and advocacy of teaching and learning. For many academic staff, e-learning represents a fundamental break with traditional teaching practices and a medium at odds with established theories of pedagogy.

For many educationalists, e-learning is a technology in the earliest stages of development as a teaching method, with delivery of online courses representing an experimental experience for many staff and students. Some educators have questioned the credibility of education in this context and also if it is justifiable to charge for courses delivered via e-learning.

Other objections include the increased support demands of e-learning systems, including system administration functions such as online registration on virtual courses. Additionally, academic staff often have concerns that they are not adequately trained in the use of systems beyond superficial procedures (such as uploading files), disregarding a wide range of complex relationships between tutor, student and system, including interaction with students through asynchronous tools (e.g. discussion boards, email) and synchronous 'chat' and whiteboard tools. The interactive, social and mentoring relationship between tutors and students has also been cited as a casualty of e-learning where increasing use of technology rather than class-based methods inevitably exacerbates low contact between teacher and student, having obvious implications for the student experience, the loss of learning insights, non-visual cues

and other social aspects of traditional class based study. Berge (1998) comments on a study of academic staff implementing e-learning in the USA:

> Impediments to online teaching and learning can be situational, epistemological, philosophical, psychological, pedagogical, technical, social, and/or cultural...

Other criticisms include the lack of control over academic content by educators, where systems are invariably managed by IT professionals and administrators. Academics can also feel institutional policy is forcing their adoption of systems. Noble (1998) considers the imposition of institutional policy on academic practice:

> Once faculty and courses go online, administrators gain much greater direct control over faculty performance and course content than ever before and the potential for administrative scrutiny, supervision, regimentation, discipline and even censorship increase dramatically.

Workload issues are also cited by academic staff as a cause of concern, including the design and development of digital resources in Word, PowerPoint or other formats. Clearly some staff may feel less comfortable developing resources for VLEs, i.e. whose teaching methods rely on face to face interaction or hardcopy texts.

The availability of email, discussion boards, messaging tools etc. can also increase the expectations of students regarding tutor interaction, leading some academics to consider their role has become a twenty-four hour one. Robert Newton (2003) reports the outcome of research conducted as part of a project funded by the Learning and Technology Support Network - Information and Computing Studies Group (LTSN-ICS):

> Web-based teaching of distance learning students requires almost twice as much time as teaching on-campus students...

Furthermore, the deployment of e-learning as a quick-fix solution for distance learning and delivery of courses overseas can put pressures on academic staff who may be unprepared for the organisational and technical challenges of teaching in this context.

Issues of security and plagiarism are also important considerations when considering online tests, exams and other sensitive activities via the VLE. Whilst some systems provide a range of security features for these purposes, there are still questions on the integrity of results from online assessment where exams are taken on a desktop computer rather than in a traditional exam setting.

Additionally, academic staff may question the strategic leadership of e-learning and the relationship of VLE and other system use within the formal teaching strategy of the institute. Clearly, these systems can only function effectively when deployed on a structured basis with appropriate integration between the registry, school administration, technical services and other departments, reflecting issues of user account administration, systems integration and day to day user support. The imposition of e-learning systems on staff in an *ad hoc* manner, without clear vision or consideration for wider institutional planning and administration can only lead to technical difficulties and misery for academic staff and students. On the implementation of e-learning, Noble (1998) comments on the lack of clear strategy in some e-learning projects, where e-learning implementation is itself the aim rather than educational strategy:

> Last but not least, behind this effort are the ubiquitous technozealots who simply view computers as the panacea for everything, because they like to play with them. With the avid encouragement of their private sector and university patrons, they forge ahead, without support for their pedagogical claims about the alleged enhancement of education, without any real evidence of productivity improvement, and without any effective demand from either students or teachers.

Finally, staff may feel that whilst traditional achievements in research and teaching excellence are rewarded, the use of e-learning may be less visible as a teaching activity and thus attract fewer rewards in terms of promotions, awards etc.

It must be mentioned however that the experience of some academic staff can be positive when using e-learning to support their teaching, improving tutor-student communication and giving the staff themselves the ability to upload documentation for student access at home or other locations through the medium of the Web, whereas earlier Web publishing required significant skill to author and upload HTML documents on a Web server. However, it is clear that e-learning represents significant justifiable concerns for the academic sector.

Critical perspectives 4: the commercialization of academia

We have already discussed the commercial background to the e-learning industry and its relationship with academic providers. There is arguably a new educational industry developing around the e-learning product which ostensibly facilitates education, solving many of the problems associated with low contact study. However, it can be seen that in many ways, this emerging industry is facilitating a

fundamental shift towards an entirely new medium of instructional design, based on the VLE model. Pailing (2002) comments:

> …the industry has suffered from a lot of hype and suppliers and customers need to look at e-learning in perspective. It is hardly surprising that most of the predictions about the e-learning market come out of the USA.

In 'Digital Diploma Mills: The Automation of Higher Education' (1998), David Noble presents a theory of the 'commoditization' of learning, describing the emerging relationship between the education sectors, government and technology industries in the USA, reflecting similar developments in the UK and Europe:

> For the universities are not simply undergoing a technological transformation. Beneath that change, and camouflaged by it, lies another: the commercialization of higher education. For here as elsewhere technology is but a vehicle and a disarming disguise.

Noble links the growth of the e-learning industry with increasing commercialisation (commoditization) of post-statutory education, citing the growth of digital industries as a direct result of the collapse of older heavy industries in the 1980s:

> The foremost promoters of this transformation are rather the vendors of the network hardware, software, and "content" - Apple, IBM, Bell, the cable companies, Microsoft, and the edutainment and publishing companies Disney, Simon and Schuster, Prentice-Hall, et al - who view education as a market for their wares, a market estimated by the Lehman Brothers investment firm potentially to be worth several hundred billion dollars (Noble 1998).

In this sense, we may be witnessing a transformation of education from the traditional taught approach to a commodity-based instruction model, where courses can be run through digital systems without the imposition of experienced academic staff. Noble suggests these changes are linked directly to government policy (in the US), which has encouraged patenting of intellectual knowledge to create new corporate markets in the face of failing heavy industries. Thus, we see a focus on the information industry by government through the university system:

> As patent holding companies, the universities set about at once to codify their intellectual property policies, develop the infrastructure for the conduct of commercially-viable research, cultivate their corporate ties, and create the mechanisms for marketing their new commodity, exclusive licenses to their patents. The result of this first phase of university commoditization was a wholesale reallocation of university resources toward its research function at the expense of its educational function (Noble 1998).

The widespread adoption of e-learning systems can therefore be seen to facilitate a new commercial market - this is part of the growing information industry which has replaced traditional industries in Western nations and which is ultimately bound to research and the patent system (to exploit intellectual properly rights for product deployment in the global marketplace).

These developments reflect the concern of academic staff in regard to the threat of automated e-learning systems, using self-directed 'learning objects' and other interactive content to replace traditional academic staff. This systemification of learning is suggested as an inevitable outcome for education by Halket (2002):

> There is no need for the creation of courses by those who did not create them before. There is no need for any new institutions. There is every need for existing institutions and existing educators to rise to the new challenge and have the best possible tools put at their disposal.

The provision of training in an e-learning context, with minimal instructor input is already being deployed by some training companies such as Thompson NETg, with contracts for training in the business and public sectors in the USA and UK. Nixon and Helms (2002) have indicated the spread of e-learning in some government and public bodies:

> Corporate universities are not new, but have experienced tremendous growth during the last ten years. Predictions are that corporate universities will outnumber traditional colleges and universities within the next ten years … Corporate universities exist in government settings and include the Internal Revenue Service, the City of Tempe's Learning Center and NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center.

Noble (1998) questions the motives of companies having access to private or sensitive data, suggesting that this data has been abused in the past:

> In Canada, for example, universities have been given royalty-free licenses to Virtual U software in return for providing data on its use to the vendors.

The role of e-learning, cited as a progressive solution to distance learning has therefore prompted concerns for the commoditization of post-statutory education. It remains to be seen if e-learning will diminish the role of academic practitioners, with the expansion of e-training in competition with traditional post-statutory education, or if e-learning is just another technological craze which settles into the academic landscape much as email, online journals, the Web and other technologies that have come before.

Critical perspectives 5: Other organisational and deployment challenges

The role of administrative structures in developing, maintaining and supporting e-learning has already been mentioned in this paper, but perhaps it is worth considering the organisational challenges of e-learning, from the wider perspective of technical staff, academics, students and other users.

The initial selection and delivery of an e-learning system is largely carried out by administrative departments. Academic staff may be involved in consultation and pilot projects, but with time constraints and limited awareness of the VLE market, the academic staff member would be hard pressed to offer a full critique of such systems. Often, the initial selection of a VLE is based on a combination of the expertise of IT or Information Professional staff, wider reading, observation of comparative systems, vendor marketing and other sources of sector advocacy. However, since the VLE project is often led by non-academic staff, it is questionable how much pedagogical input will inform the choice of system.

Significant obstacles face the various stakeholders (users, administrators, moderators etc.) of the e-learning system We have initial design questions of how to present the VLE system, including interface design and possibly integration within the wider institutional 'portal' or Web based services. There are also issues of user management, involving user account creation, integration with user directory systems (e.g. allowing single sign on) and access to virtual courses which appear in parallel to actual programmes. Indeed this latter aspect presents the question of how effectively the VLE course structure can be presented - clearly the system may appear confusing if virtual courses are named differently than actual courses. On the other hand, it may be necessary to develop these sites according to the wishes of academic staff, reflecting the way these teachers wish to operate in the online context. Clearly these organisational issues are all important for the success or failure of the e-learning system.

The development of support services around the VLE involves considerable staffing, usually involving the appointment of teams dealing with VLE delivery. In some cases, departments are created to support academic staff in the pedagogic aspects of course delivery and management, whilst smaller institutions may use existing IT or Information Services staff to undertake this role. However, smaller organisations are likely to place much of the responsibility for system administration on existing staff, e.g. school

administrators and academic staff, increasing their workloads in the process.

Conclusion

We have examined a range of critical positions on e-learning and perhaps we should mention some of the counter-arguments to these criticisms. Increased provision of support staff and additional training can offset some of the concerns for work overload by existing staff. Additionally, the imposition of new e-learning responsibilities can arguably enrich the role of some administrative staff. A wide range of guidelines for the deployment and delivery of e-learning (often based on research) have been disseminated within the education sectors by organisations such as JISC (the Joint Information Systems Committee).

The objections to fundamental e-learning concepts and the systemisation of education however cannot easily be dismissed. For some academic staff, e-learning clearly represents a technology to enhance communication with low-contact students, in distance, part time and work-based education. However, others may remain suspicious of e-learning trends and the wider UK agenda.

It is perhaps also necessary to consider some of the ethical and polemic issues surrounding the use of e-learning. It should be considered that the systemification of learning is invariably motivated by the need to develop and enhance the labour market within our wider economic system, thereby perpetuating the capitalist ethic of commercial profit. It is this focus on the labour market and underlying economic process which appears to drive the widening participation and lifelong learning agendas, rather than the perceived ethical justification for improvement in educational standards often cited in policy.

The emergence of a training-focused agenda driven by government and implemented by educational providers struggling to survive in a market-led environment (characterised by increasing private sector competition for contracts, grants and student fees) has led to a reduction in funding for traditional subjects and an increasing focus on vocational courses. The essentially political and economic agenda of widening access to education is facilitating the transformation of educational experience from the richer opportunities of traditional provision, to a narrow, work-focused training system. This is evident from the growth of GNVQ and vocational-based subjects in the secondary school sector. E-learning it seems, is playing a key

role in this training agenda through the systemification of learning itself. These concepts are developed by Glenn Rikowski in his work *The Battle in Seattle Its Significance for Education* (2001). Indeed, the entire concept of e-learning and lifelong learning suggests an onerous demand on the citizen to maintain their own personal knowledge and skills in the economic system, Rikowski (2001) comments on the perpetual responsibility for lifelong learning placed on the individual:

> Concretely, the infinite social drive to enhance labour-power quality expresses itself in a myriad of education policies and outlooks; 'raising standards' (to ever higher levels); school improvements (you can *always* improve); attaining better 'human capital' than this or that competitor (with no *end* to the process possible) (p.35).

The transformation of education from a process of enrichment and wider cultural experience to a systemic training process is reflected in the seminal work of Karl Marx, *Das Kapital* (Capital) where Marx cites the importance of intellectual labour as comparative with manual labour. In the capitalist system, the intellectual labour of the educator simply becomes a component of the 'teaching factory', the intellectual labour of the schoolmaster is exploited and overworked in an effort to produce the next generation of workers, where the surplus-labour of schoolmaster and pupils is the basis of profit derived by the economic system:

> Capitalist production is not merely the production of commodities, it is essentially the production of surplus-value... If we may take an example from outside the sphere of production of material objects, a schoolmaster is a productive labourer, when, in addition to belabouring the heads of his scholars, he works like a horse to enrich the school proprietor. That the latter has laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of in a sausage factory, does not alter the relation (V.XVI.3).

Further discussion on the status of intellectual labour from a Marxist perspective is available in Ruth Rikowski's detailed analysis of recent World Trade Organisation policies in *Globalisation, Information and Libraries: The implications of the World Trade Organisation's GATS and TRIPS Agreements* (Chandos Publishing, 2005).

In conclusion, the ethical, operational and pedagogical objections to e-learning are compelling, but this has not stopped the widespread adoption of this medium across the Further and Higher education sectors, suggesting that e-learning is more than a passing phase in educational technology and will remain a major feature of the modern educational context. It is hoped this paper will provoke thought and discussion on the present and future role of e-learning,

a phenomenon which promises much but also clearly has the potential to facilitate radical change within our educational systems.

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Education for Social Change or for Capital Crisis Resolution

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Introduction

The simple yet complex reality that we have to face is that capitalism actually survives and thrives on economic crises; that crises act as circuit breakers in capitalism's head long rush to self-destruction; and that expansion is the chief means of resolving them. Paradoxically, therefore it can be said that whatever its intensity and wherever it occurs at a local or global level, a crisis functions as a stimulus driving capital accumulation and expansion. The cumulative effect is that today there are few avenues of human activity and social life, including education and associated information services, which are beyond subservience to the absurd and irrational whirlpool of capitalism's dynamics.

This is the key issue confronting those who seek to develop a practical theory of education for social change, and who see that there are possibilities for a more socially oriented existence beyond the limits of the horizon set by capitalism, and are determined to work towards it.

As a contribution towards this project this article presents a critical account of the dynamics within capitalism which are driving education towards marketisation and its exploitation as a crisis management strategy for capital. In this task I draw on Marx's critique of capital and on the analyses of those Marxists (Harvey, 1982; Mandel, 1968; and Rubin, 1972) who have sought to extend his analysis within the historical materialist frame of reference, and to complement the critical discourses, for instance, on government business policies for education (Allen et al, 1999), on equity (Hill and Cole, 2001), social justice (Fitzclarence and Kenway, 1993), pedagogy critique (McLaren and Farahmandpur, 1999), ideology critique (Hill et al, 1999), resistance critique (Rikowski, G. 2001), and the impact of trade policies on information services (Rikowski, R. 2005).

Towards the Marketisation of Education

Marketisation under the conditions specific to the capitalist economy or mode of production is a process in which things are severed from their social connections and transformed into reified, atomised units of measure. In the process they acquire the property of exchangeability, of exchange value; the only form in which their value can be converted into money capital, which is the whole point of the exercise.

The separation, or alienation, of things as discrete entities from their social settings, which explain their nature and their existence, is a precondition for their commodification and privatisation within the capitalist economic system. It is therefore an important part of understanding the current directions of educational change to refer to education's historical development. The development can be seen as a series of transitional phases which if current trends are maintained will see education's integration into the economy as a capitalist mode of education (Raduntz, 2001, p.317ff).

Education's historical record shows that from its beginnings it has been inextricably bound up with class divisions serving the interests of the ruling elites, and that though in the modern era a trend can be detected towards education's social democratisation it still remains linked to interests of capitalism's ruling elites.

At the beginning of the modern era with the disintegration of feudalism and the influx of new learning into Europe pressures mounted which challenged the church's monopoly on education. Thus began its separation as a function within the institutional setting of the medieval church and its reconstitution into schools and universities solely dedicated to education.

At the same time there began the segmentation of the body of knowledge into discrete disciplines which Mészáros (1970, p. 109ff) links to the alienating influence of the capitalist economy. In these forms each discipline acquired marketable value rated according to its usefulness upon which the salaries and stipends of teachers could be determined. For example, in the emerging market economy professors of highly valued medicine and rhetoric could command the highest salaries, philosophers the lowest (Ganss, 1956, p.39). In the case of hiring a schoolmaster in the town of Treviso the knowledge to be taught was graded in terms of degrees of difficulty so that pay scales could be fixed according to a pupil's degree of attainment. The value of category one, the 'elementary

stuff', therefore was worth, say, half a ducat, while the value of the more difficult categories attracted higher pay (Ariès, 1973, p.174).

At this stage the provision of education took on local and regional characteristics and was spread across a range of informal domestic and formal independent settings. It was from these existing provisions of education that the emerging capitalist economy was able to draw for artisans' labour and the science and technology that were to become the basis of its economic growth.

In the industrial revolution period such was its success, derived from the application of newly created scientific knowledge and technology that pressure mounted for the technical efficiency these engendered to be applied in the systematic provision of education. Modelled on organisational arrangements similar to those existing in commerce and industry, national education systems were set up by state authorities mainly because in capitalism's formative years the scale of education required to support the phenomenal growth of the economy demanded funding beyond the resources of private investment capital. An additional factor was that the private provision of education could not supply the number of skilled workers, scientists and bureaucrats that a nation's burgeoning industries and state instrumentalities required.

In this regard, the Prussian education initiative in the early nineteenth century provided a model which gave Germany an economic advantage and which other European nations sought to emulate (Musgrave, 1967). Prussia's initiative also included the setting up of the state sponsored University of Berlin with a mandate of free inquiry without government interference, and the provision of teacher training. An appreciation that too much teacher education, however, might pose a danger to their conservative regimes was something that dominated education reforms by subsequent reactionary governments.

As a result of these developments education generally became highly systematised, centralised and bureaucratically administered as a state monopoly. As the economy continued to expand, however, and the cost of education grew, all sectors of education, private and public, universities, vocational education and formal education became subject in varying degrees to state regulation and funding. From a function monopolised by the medieval church therefore, education since has become reconstituted as a state monopoly. The next step, I submit, is the integration of education's potentially profitable sectors into the economy as capitalism reaches its maturity as a global market regulated economy, and this will

mean a modification in its structure characterised by centralisation and decentralisation.

Corresponding to the development of what may be termed an instrumental approach to education has been developments in the theory and practice of education motivated by humanist ideals which see education as a means of developing human potentialities and advancing the creation of a society that would reflect what proponents considered to be the freedom intrinsic to what it is to be human (see Bowen, 1981, p.440ff). A project of this kind required universal access to education, a focus on the creation and acquisition of knowledge, and the exercise of critical reasoning as the means of achieving this end.

In the development of modern education therefore there has been a countervailing undertow which lately has emphasised citizenship values (see Marginson, 1997a).

The expansionary economic conditions of the post World War II era under the regime of Keynesian economic management policies conspired to bring the economic and social imperatives of modern education together. For education was seen as a means not only of personal development fulfilling the aspirations of the majority of people for a better future but also of national and global economic development. Under these circumstances government education expenditure occupied a large slice of the gross national product reflecting education's growing prominence in guaranteeing an ever-expanding economy (Bowen, 1981, p.526ff).

During the 1960s, as education became increasingly utilitarian to the detriment of the ideals of human development, dissent among tertiary students reached boiling point, particularly in France. Following the economic crisis of the 1970s, however, the utilitarian trend became more marked as reflected increasingly in the proletarianisation and deteriorating conditions of teachers' work (Ozga and Lawn, 1988). It gathered momentum as state policies under the influence of New Right ideology particularly in English speaking nations, began to restructure their education systems to become more flexible and responsive to the needs of their economies in the face of competition and free trade on a global scale.

The restructuring of education systems, particularly those organised and administered by the state, has for the most part followed the models adopted by transnational corporations which has seen the retention of central fiscal, policy-making and administrative control while at the same time effecting the decentralisation of their

divisions into semi autonomous competing units of productive activity.

This brief historical excursion is designed to facilitate an understanding of the rationale underlying education's reconstitution as a capitalist enterprise which is to be found in contemporary capitalism's attempts to overcome its current economic dilemmas, and of the role that these crises are playing in determining the direction of education's development.

The Inner Dynamics of the Capitalist Economy

A historical overview of education reveals elements of correspondence between developments in education and in the capitalist economy. What has now to be revealed is the nature of the current economic crisis and how this is affecting educational change. For the exercise the following analysis draws on Marx's critique of capital in which he employs the value relation as his governing principle and the relation between the forces and social relations of production as his organising framework.

In his opening analysis of capital Marx establishes that the source and substance of value which permits the exchange and equalisation of commodities of different kinds is the amount of abstract labour expended in their production carried out under specific social conditions in which 'private individuals or groups of individuals…carry on their work independently of each other' (Marx, 1954, p.77).

Marx also establishes that because the market implies a process of equalisation then the source of capital expansion cannot but occur in the sphere of production. Furthermore, in production there exist social relations of exploitation, and therefore inequality, arising from historical conditions in which a class of workers is forced to sell its labour power to a class of capitalists who possess the purchasing power of capital. For Marx, the relationship between capital and wage labour encapsulates the primary social relation which forms the basis of capital accumulation and expansion and therefore characterises the capitalist economy.

In the sphere of production the expansion of capital begins with the extraction by an enterprise of surplus value by the simple expedient of hiring individual workers for a set period, say, of eight hours and setting them to work to produce commodities for the purpose not of fulfilling human needs but for market exchange and profit. By

employing a number of strategies, structuring and managing the labour process more efficiently and raising labour's productivity for instance, the enterprise can recoup its labour costs in six hours and accrue to itself the value, as a surplus, of the commodities produced in the remaining unpaid two hours (Marx, 1954, p.188). As an expression of an amount of surplus labour time the surplus value is then realised as an expansion on the original capital invested in production when the commodities are sold on the market. By way of illustration, in a contract between de Jelly, master-weaver, and one Nicholas Cornélis in 1634, there is stated bluntly that the latter will be paid half of what he makes, the other half being the master's profit (Mandel, 1968, p.132).

It can be appreciated that an enterprise will want to maximise the surplus value component of the value materialised in the commodities produced and will therefore concentrate on improving efficiencies and productivity. While these circumstances have the potential to lift economic growth the sale of the commodities produced and their value realised as money capital can be problematic if they cannot be sold for a variety of reasons. There is therefore a potential for an economic crisis because the whole purpose of the exercise, the accumulation and expansion of capital, is disrupted.

In order to grasp the dynamics entailed in the production and exchange of commodities it needs to be appreciated that on Marx's account (1954, p.529; and 1967a, pp.41-42) capital is a circulating process in which production and exchange are moments. Through the medium of money, and beginning with exchange, money capital is invested to purchase labour power and means of production. Capital, in the form of production capital, traverses through the labour process in which means of production are converted into commodities as materialised value containing the capital originally invested plus a surplus value. Finally, the commodities are brought to the market, sold and their value realised as expanded money capital. And so the process begins in a continuous round of reproduction and accumulation.

As a way of illustrating the dynamics involved not only within the spheres of production and exchange but in the relationship between them, we can follow an enterprise as it seeks to make a profit.

In the sphere of exchange an enterprise faces competition and uncertainty and therefore must grab as large a market share as it can. This can be done in the sphere of production by producing commodities more efficiently and productively and therefore at a cheaper price in order to undercut the prices of competitors. The

enterprise makes an above average profit because the cheaper prices not only corner the existing market but also stimulate greater demand against what are now the dearer prices of competitors.

As the enterprise's production expands to meet the new level of demand the enterprise attracts capital investment and the labour which is now surplus to the requirements of competitors whose production has been forced to contract. Enjoying above average profit is only temporary for our enterprise, however, because in order to avoid bankruptcy competitors must themselves follow the lead and introduce cost saving strategies and technology similar to those employed by our enterprise. The effect, however, is not to grant above average profits to all enterprises but to restore the profit margin to its average level so that each enterprise is forced to renew efforts mainly through technological change to grab above average profits. In these circumstances, there is an enforced continuous leapfrogging among enterprises as new technologies are adopted independently of the will of any particular capital enterprise because in the final analysis the expansion of capital depends on above average profit-making (Harvey, 1982, pp.120-121).

In the sphere of production one of the means open to an enterprise in augmenting its market share is to raise labour's productivity through technological innovation and change. The strategy has the effect not only of lowering the value of labour power and therefore the unit price per commodity thrown on the market but also of requiring organisational change to conform to the new production regime which the technology has created. The raising of productivity to save labour constitutes one of capitalism's basic contradictions because the effect of introducing technological efficiencies is to reduce the input of the very labour power which creates the surplus value on which capital expansion depends.

For the enterprise the technology of mechanisation together with scientific management techniques and segmented detail work regimes affords it greater control over the labour process so that it can be organised to accord closely with the needs of capital not the worker (Braverman, 1974). Such efficiencies include the systematic separation of mental and manual labour and the subdivision of work processes into constituent specialised and therefore limited and detailed operations. The upside for the enterprise is that the mobilisation and concentration of science and technology in the hands of management provides it with the organising ability and capacity to revolutionise production almost at will.

The downside, however, is that with the restructuring of the workplace the enterprise is continually confronted with the

antagonism of workers who are faced with the falling value of their wages, the threat of lay-offs, and the progressive deterioration of their working conditions; for example the erosion of autonomy over their work practices, the intensification of their work and reduction or obsolescence of their skills as they become mere appendages in a mechanised labour process. Marx (1954, p. 372ff) and Braverman (1974) have recorded the deleterious effects of these developments on workers.

Paradoxically, however, besides competition worker antagonism in production can also constitute a motivational factor for an enterprise to introduce further technological change and restructuring of the workplace.

While an enterprise can control to a certain extent the conditions in the workplace the chaotic and uncertain conditions in the market place is another matter. These conditions are reflected in the daily price fluctuations which are a feature of commodity trading. If circulation through production and exchange is taken as a whole we can see why capitalism thrives and survives on the chaos and uncertainty which are features of capitalist commodity exchange.

On the market while prices fluctuate daily it can be noted that over time they oscillate around an average price which in idealised circumstances would be proportional to the value of the labour-time materialised in the commodities being exchanged. This would establish a state of equilibrium throughout the economy because it would reflect the equal distribution of labour among enterprises according to demand.

In the capitalist economy, however, the average price is proportional to the costs of production for a given product plus the average profit on the capital invested (Rubin, 1972, p.63ff). Furthermore, because the capitalist economy is supply rather than demand driven and because its division of labour consists of producers working independently and separately from each other there is no one controlling the distribution of labour and individual producers have no way of gauging how much to produce or how much their competitors are producing. There is therefore the constant tendency to overproduce or underproduce.

In this event, if demand does not rise to meet supply, then overproduction and a corresponding fall in prices will occur. Consequently, as production contracts, in response the capital and labour surplus to requirements will gravitate towards those enterprises enjoying a period of expansion. The reverse is the case for underproduction. The see-saw distribution of capital and labour allows expanding enterprises to produce above average surplus

value and thereby to realise above average profits at the expense of contracting enterprises. The effect is to create conditions of disequilibrium, instability and uncertainty on the market which paradoxically at the same time are the very conditions necessary if capital is to accumulate and expand.

Taken as a whole we can see how the imperative for individual enterprises constantly to revolutionise their forces and social relations of production, while stimulating economic growth and profit-making, can at the same time jeopardise the continuing reproduction of capital accumulation. The market is the only mechanism available to correct the threat to continuing capital accumulation in the absence of any regulation of production (a circumstance which would contravene the freedom of producing enterprises). In planning their production targets, enterprises are influenced only by the market where their products are equalized, and it becomes clear as indicated by the rise or fall in prices that supply has outstripped demand. In this case, enterprises are induced to contract or expand their production. In this event the threat posed by instability is averted and a state of equilibrium temporarily established.

The foregoing account has sought to show how instability paradoxically stimulate as well as threaten economic growth in a roller coaster pattern. In this pattern uncertainty and instability follow certainty and stability while at the same time sustaining the social relations based on private property on which capitalism depends. This pattern is punctuated by economic crises which constitute the mechanism impelling capitalism's reproduction and development despite the chaotic conditions of capital expansion.

The Expansion of Capitalism: The Ultimate in Crisis Management Resolution

Capitalism's development is characterised by periodic crises derived from the unlimited development of the forces of production through constant technological change which continually presses against the barrier of capitalism's social relations. In these circumstances the cycle of accumulation comes to a halt. The ensuing economic stagnation is expressed in the forms of overproduction, speculative investment, crises, unemployment and overaccumulation of non-invested capital (Harvey, 1982, p.190).

The causes of economic crises internal to the working of capitalism are many and varied which include factors within the spheres of

production (machinery breakdown, strikes by workers, delays in deliveries of raw materials) or exchange (poor consumer demand; inflationary price fluctuations, problems associated with credit and insolvency), and in the circulation between and within the spheres of production and exchange (slow turnover times due to inefficiencies in transport, trade barriers, and the slow pace of or inadequate structural reform).

The crises cause the devaluation of labour power and skills together with the devaluation, depreciation, even destruction, of existing capital values invested in means of production, machinery and in fixed assets. The economic wastage is enormous and the repercussions socially devastating which find expression in political and social conflict and tensions.

The wastage in labour and the devaluation of surplus capital, however, paradoxically serve to provide the basis for a recovery of the accumulation cycle by clearing away obsolete technologies, practices and structures and instituting structural adjustments, rationalisations and reforms, new monetary systems, new policy structures and new organisational forms (Harvey, 1982, p. 431).

Although many social institutions and organisational structures, what Harvey calls social infrastructures, particularly those under state control like education for instance, are not directly productive in terms of capital accumulation, nevertheless capital value in the form of revenue circulates through and is modulated by them. They become part of capitalism's continuous exploration and modification of organisational arrangements which can alleviate and contain the tensions arising from capitalism's inner dynamics. The circulation of value through social infrastructures on this account can be regarded as momentary circuits in the total accumulation process. Such flows for instance have supported scientific research and development (see Harvey, 1982, p.398ff).

Economic crises thus reveal dual functions not only of devaluing and destroying the 'old' but also of preparing the ground for economic recovery and the 'new' in a continuous round of economic instability and stability. In this way, the crises mediate a 'space' between production and exchange in which the forces and the social relations of production can adjust to and resolve the tensions between each other, for unlimited development of the forces of production creates stress which can be overcome only by restructuring organisational arrangements. However, if the basic class relation remains unaltered, the contradictions between the forces and the social relations of production are not resolved but merely displaced and recreated on a different plane (Harvey, 1982, p.326).

In capitalism's history, economic crises have given rise to what may be described as crisis management strategies which, like the crises from which they emerge, have the dual function of resolving instability on the one hand and of stimulating economic recovery on the other. To illustrate: credit and finance capital can play a positive role in providing loans to further economic expansion. In the form of debt, however, credit can cause bankruptcy as well as stimulate speculative fever to the point of economic collapse. A reserve army of unemployed for instance as cheap labour can form the basis of recovery to counter the inflationary pressures which scarce and expensive labour power can help to create. Furthermore, organisational arrangements can provide a degree of stability yet also pose a barrier to ongoing development and economic growth. Furthermore, monopoly corporations and centralised banking facilities have emerged as a way of coping with economic crises and uncertainty. The state and its instrumentalities, the ideological apparatuses and education systems also serve the same dual functions.

In contemporary capitalism, according to Mandel (1975, p.562) and as foreshadowed by Marx (1967b, p.266), the consequences of the contradiction between the enormous economic growth which the capitalist market economy has spawned, and the limitations and therefore the barriers imposed on it by its private property relations has reached critical and explosive proportions not only within nations but spreading globally. The tensions created are manifested in the rapid succession of economic crises, the growing disparity between rich and poor and the escalation of social conflict and economic instability and strife.

The capitalist system is responding in the only way it knows how, by accelerating the development and dispersal of information technology, investing huge amounts of capital in technological innovation, research and development, and last but not least in armaments manufacture, constantly and with increasing speed restructuring all facets of the economy, breaking down the barriers to free trade and competition globally and penetrating all sectors of social life (Mandel, 1975, pp.387-88). Above all, however, it is becoming evident that crisis management techniques based on Taylor's principles of scientific management are being applied to and invading sectors of social life, education for instance, as these are subjected to the processes of marketisation.

The Direction of Educational Change

It is within the matrix of capitalism's contradictions and the role played by economic crises that the current direction of educational change can be understood. For education has, in the current period of capitalism's development, taken centre stage as a crisis management strategy in its roles as a productive force, as a consumer of surplus capital, and as a means of warehousing (see Shor, 1980) and rotating surplus labour through cycles of employment and unemployment in a life-long educative process. Furthermore, it has become significant in terms of its role in research, in staff development and training in order to ameliorate the excesses and social stresses of constant organisational restructuring, and in assisting employees to adapt to the needs of their employers under these circumstances.

These roles can be effective only if education is closely tied and is responsive to the economy's swiftly changing needs and this means education's marketisation and integration into the market economic regime itself. In this event education becomes subject to all the contradictions, instability and uncertainty that are inherent in the capitalist economy and which have plagued its development. It will also mean the introduction into education of those working conditions and its subjection to the rapid succession of structural changes which are a feature of capitalism in its contemporary development.

The recognition of education as a productive force has since the 1940s emerged out of capitalism's growing dependence on technological innovation not only in the development of electronically controlled automation (Mandel 1975, p.207) but also in what is considered to be the new basis of economic growth, information technology. The growing dependence on these technologies has seen a shift away from manual to intellectual labour in the corporate workplace. It has also seen increasingly massive investments in and the structuring of science, technological innovation and research as specific business enterprises structured and rationalised on a capitalist basis. In turn these developments have created an enormous demand for highly skilled intellectual labour power which accounts for the expansion of the tertiary education sector in the 1950s.

As the cumulative growth of science and the greater acceleration of research and development gains momentum capitalist processes of increasing division of labour, rationalisation and specialisation in the drive for private profit penetrate the spheres of intellectual labour and scientific education (Mandel, 1975, pp.249, and pp.261-63).

There follows the proletarianisation of intellectual labour and the instrumentalisation of curricula where humanities barely rate as qualifications are tailored to specific labour process needs.

These developments can be ascribed to the enormous build up of private surplus capital which puts pressure on a cash strapped government funded education system as a means of absorbing the excess capital and thereby promoting economic recovery. In these circumstances education is doubly lucrative for it also provides opportunities for educational goods, for consultancy and professional development services, curricula packages and for information technology. There is also the potential exchange value represent in the repositories of information and knowledge in library facilities (Rikowski, 2001/2002).

As education becomes remodelled along business lines features common to commodity production, mechanisation, standardisation, over specialisation and the parcellisation of labour will increasingly penetrate education as it is in other sectors of social life (Mandel, 1975, p.387).

It is perhaps in the area of crisis management, in the overall containment of capitalism's internal contradictions, however, that education plays a significant role, a role that is hitherto somewhat under researched.

Conclusion

There is little doubt that the direction of educational change is heading towards its direct integration into the capitalist economy. It is possible to recognise in the changes those features which characterise the commodification and marketisation processes necessary for the production and realisation of surplus value as capital.

What the analysis has shown, moreover, is that in the process education becomes another tool in capitalism's crisis management armoury involved in stimulating economic growth on the one hand, and simultaneously absorbing the surplus capital that accrues from that growth on the other. In other words, education is being shaped for capital.

The analysis also reveals the inner nature of capitalism's inner dynamics governing its development to be, as Harvey (1982, p.203) and Marx before him have observed, cold, ruthless and inexorable, responding only to the law of the market. Yet, as a social relation

capitalism is a product of human historical development which has come to dominate, dehumanise and delimit human existence and freedom. Set against this are the aspirations for education raised by these very processes as an instrument of human and social development which its marketisation would appear to compromise.

The practical question then becomes how might the current trends in education through educational research and effective action be employed positively in order, not to pose an alternative within the existing capitalist social relations, but to overcome them so that the possibility of a society which is not driven by the private profit motive might be realised.

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Problems in Education Today

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Education is something that has been almost completely redefined within the past ten years or so for both the academic and the general public. There was once a time when in order to be educated, one had to bring ones self to the very notion of 'being educated', and in order to do this, one had to search it out. Education was once something that was hidden behind secret walls and hieroglyphics, a mystery to the masses and a secret treasury and hideout for the privileged. It sounds as if I'm speaking about the Victorian ages, when kids would climb chimneys and thinkers would gather in a specified section of a library or tavern, but no, it was only ten-twenty years ago! How can a thing such as this be explained? 'To be educated' is no longer seen as an alternative path, but is now the mainstream. At what gain and at what loss has such a change come to?

Will things ever go back to the way they were, or is it the case that education is destined to be swamped with students, teachers, league-tables and the lark? Will Oxford continue to reject ever longer lists of straight 'A' students? Will business studies and psychology continue to be jam-packed with money-loving learners? Will education's link to career, to money, to profit, to what I call 'meaningless education', continue to be heightened, reinforced, promoted and based upon the general and foremost assumption that 'education = personal success', rather than what I would say it should mean which is 'education = the undying lust to *be* educated'? How far can we go until society begins to hate education for all its pretensions, shallowness and the idea of 'being educated' as much as students hate the idea of working all evenings at McDonalds whilst their student debts are growing ever larger? For education and the educated these are very frightening times, and what I think is more frightening than the amount of soulless and robotic mannerisms of student struggles, financially and supportively, is the fact that both mankind's affirmed and assumed definitions of education is rapidly changing before our very eyes. Privatisation of schools, over-testing, student stress, unhealthy catering, debt, career, one's future: all of these and many more are now commonly known and used phrases within educational topics, and whilst some people would accept this as simply 'the way things are going', there are others of us who would feel a little nausea in

our stomachs each time these words and phrases are used, especially those who take the concept of 'being educated' as a deeply personal one of great value and importance.

What have been some of the consequences of all this? That special section of the library and that special tavern where all the thinkers used to gather has most certainly vanished, or else become harder to find, more elite, more secretive, more protective. If I knew of such a place I would be sure to tell no one about it unless I was certain that they ought to. But perhaps more importantly, those that are able to see beyond the shallow flamboyancy and firework displays of 'education = personal success' are pushed ever further back into a shadow. Oh, where have their identities gone? There was once a time when a truly 'educated' person stood out like a sore thumb, especially if he/she were a graduate from a working class background. More importantly, even if they *didn't* stand out like a sore thumb, they at least *felt* as if they did.

Recently an advert was on the television promoting a certain university with the general message that was 'discover the real person inside you trying to break free'. You may know it yourself; it's the one where some guy has some hands trying to burst out from underneath his skin on his chest, the hands being the icon of 'the *real him*' (an advert which I think would very much scare little children. It reminded me of the 'Alien' films – rated 18). Anyhow, you can imagine how angry that made me. 'Great!' I thought to myself. 'So what I once considered to be my own personal privilege, my own personal gift, even my own personal right perhaps, is now being advertised! – Advertised to be swamped, consumed, used up, swallowed whole and turned into the common dreams of successful careers, large houses, posh cars and trophy wives, dreams that everyone can have but obviously, only very few can get!'

'The right to be educated'; what does that mean? To the common man it means exactly that, a right which each and everyone ought to enforce, a right they have over anyone no matter how rich, clever or well represented. What I would urge people to consider is not to politically or literally enforce a statement I shall give, but to be as aware of it within our modern society as they are of the statement 'education = personal success' and that is this: 'one has to *earn* the right to be educated'. But can anyone promise that a statement like that shall one day become common place? And if it were to become common place, how will people then go about 'earning that right'? More realistically speaking, in the face of how 'a degree will get you a good job and fulfil all your dreams', who on earth is ever going to care about *earning the right to an education* and take something so baseless, so unpractical, so silly even as

something serious? – I shall tell you who shall care about it; it is only the people who believe they have in fact *earned* it.

It's easy for people to shout out here and there what their rights are, it's easy to claim when someone has been discriminated against due to their sex, race and abilities/disabilities, yet when someone feels they have earned something which very few others earned, how can he or she shout about that? Would he or she even *want* to shout about it? I wouldn't, simply because it isn't actually anything you *can* shout about. One person cannot tell a hundred other people that their presence is displeasing and thus he/she takes it upon his/herself to do something about it. That's just being anti-social, that's being impractically awkward and that's just being a nuisance. So to raise the question again, what does 'the right to be educated' mean for these people that feel they must suffer in silence on top of debt, stress, privatisation and all the other growing factors of severe hardship and vulgarities in education? The 'right to be educated' is without doubt founded upon some law based upon some kind of anti-discrimination act. As a result education has turned into something which transforms students into working cogs of capital, which in the eyes of those that value education, our modern, flashy, trendy and future-embracing education system simply *isn't* education. What about *our* rights?

Hush, hush now, let us not all shout and preach of our so-called rights. Boasting about them would be the last thing I would want to do. Yet what the problem here is I think is the actual grounds upon which these rights are based. It is clear to me that everyone in fact *cannot* have a right to an education; in as far as each person shall define the word and, most importantly, its most immediate uses. I would propose that it is impossible. Economically and statistically, the direction in which our current education system is going is fairer. It turns all our future workers into skilled, computer-literate, multi-lingual, well-written, well-spoken, well-mannered folk, which will be very economically rewarding. The advances that are being made via disability access in schools and anti-discrimination policies are very rewarding in terms of exercising equal opportunity and statistically, we are generally bringing many more numbers into the learning circles, particularly in higher education. Yet surely, the purpose and true value of education ought not to lie predominantly and wholeheartedly within these issues. Since when did the true value, meaning and charm of education lie within economic growth and educating people merely for the sake of exercising their rights? However, there is little to nothing that I can prove unless I define what I mean by *earning the right to an education.* A person usually goes to Oxford or Cambridge by achieving perfect grades and with average grades a person gets a mediocre university packed full of

people and no special, individual attention. Many people would say that getting good grades does not prove you are a clever person and the same goes for low grades and low intelligence, but what I believe is important to understand is what is *required* of a person to get these high grades.

From my own experiences of education, it doesn't take brains to earn grades, as having brains is merely a useful bonus. What is most important I believe is the person's character; or rather, how flexible, easily-moulded, easily-crafted, shape-shifting, surface-pleasing and substance-abandoning a person's character is. What is then required is a lot of dedication and basically a lot of work. Individual style, clever tweaks, sly moves, random outbursts, mere hints of references, signs of inner confrontation and disagreement and minds unmade, clues indicating a person that is growing and learning rather than having grown and learnt and in many ways general creativity seems to me to be a thing of the past. Yet I do not feel as though examinations and coursework should be abolished altogether because I believe that they *can* be done so that grades are accurate in regards to a person's intelligence, but our education system marks papers in accordance to how much a person knows, how clearly they get that knowledge across and more or less how much they have stuck to everything told to them in class.

Quantity of knowledge, clarity of knowledge, organisation of knowledge, selectivity and appropriation of knowledge and formality of knowledge is what students are being marked on by today's examiners. For most people, this system works perfectly, and of course it'll work perfectly for our economy. Yet there are those of us, or perhaps it's just me, that feel there is something deeply and tragically wrong with this and who feel as though they are not being tested in areas where they ought to be tested. They are not being tested for example, on how evident it is that they have taken what they have learnt to heart and how much they have grown as people from what they have learnt and how they may be likely to take what they have learnt and recreate it all in their own fashion, to make their own system of ideas, imaginings and ponderings. They are not being tested for example, not just on how much they have taken in from what they've learnt, but also on how much they are capable of giving something back to that very same subject from which they learnt.

As an article written by Geraldine Hackett and Sian Griffiths (2006) in *The Sunday Times* suggests, I'm not the only one who thinks that individual and original students are being hard done by as they say that 'schools complain that candidates who display originality are

being let down by inflexible marking schemes and poorly qualified examiners'. John Bald, an education consultant, comments (in Hackett and Griffiths, 2006): "Boards are trying to get a grip on the expansion in numbers getting top grades by using rigid mark systems that do not take account of exceptional intellectual ability". The numbers of papers being sent back to examiners for re-marking has increased by 20% in the past two years. I was one of those students myself as in getting a D in my Philosophy A-Level my teacher said that in my synopsis the examiner probably did not understand my clever use of Nietzsche's views on ethics in a question about Sartre's standing on moral responsibility. My synopsis didn't go any higher on a re-grade, yet according to this newspaper article, grades have been known to go 'from Unclassified to a B', due to a huge display of originality.

So what is the result of all this? Are top universities being pumped full of megabyte-high-capacity automatons? If the growing numbers of A-grade students is a problem, as John Bald suggests (in Hackett and Griffiths, 2006), why do examiners not do what I think is the most justifiable and sensible thing and mark even more strictly upon 'automated' and routine answers and be far more lenient with original ones; that way we get people that deserve a place in Oxford into Oxford don't we? The reason why examiners will not mark this way is because it is obviously too dangerous. It would mean that they would have to actually *engage* with what is being written and with the potential of the person *behind what is written* rather than look at what is written through special 2D goggles; goggles that are exam board friendly, goggles that place no personal responsibility upon the examiners as it essentially *isn't them* that is marking it. Plus it would mean that students would realize that originality does get you higher marks... hang on, that's a good thing isn't it! It would also probably mean that less people would even be interested in going to university as it would again become a place for intellectuals rather than business men and women with aspirations of well paid careers.

And it is not just original students that feel they must suffer as pressure is put on to them to in fact be 'less original'. There are many teachers, who were once students themselves living in an education system which was once far more free and open for individual thinkers, who are now tired of meetings where they have to take notice of top managements, inspectors and government curriculum guidelines. My philosophy teacher was one of those teachers who were critical of the ways in which she was being forced to teach. There are teachers out there that feel the desperate urge to actually *'teach'.*

What does the word 'teach' mean? – for without doubt, the word 'teacher' has also been hugely redefined. The most instant definition of it is for one person to inform another person/s about something he/she knows that they do not. Yet on a level of more gravity I believe 'teaching' also contains the disposition of a person informing another from a first-person perspective. To teach someone something means to say 'this is what *I* have learnt'. This does not mean to say that teachers ought to ram their opinions down the throats of students. Yet teachers themselves are being forced to also become automated input, output devices, and it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to break out of this hardening shell.

Teachers are more accurately defined as 'messengers' in today's education system I believe. They pass a message from a 'blackboard of knowledge' onto the students and are only teachers in as far as students respond to their messages with individual questions, that is if it is a question that the 'board of knowledge' would validate as unoriginal enough to answer. In short, 'to teach' once meant to teach from a first-person perspective and today it means to teach from a third-person perspective, meaning that the individual behind the 'shadow of a teacher' becomes ever more enraged at their own passivity and students feel an ever-increasing feeling of being alienated from the *knowledgeable* and perhaps *wise authoritarian* that teachers are traditionally taken for.

It is one thing to say that original students and teachers are severely suffering, yet now is a good time to raise perhaps an even bigger problem. Let us say that a modern day Ludwig Wittgenstein, Einstein, Karl Marx or Beethoven walks into our education circles today … imagine the difficulties that such a person shall encounter and as a result of this, how much future thinkers, systems of thought, economic theory and practice, ethical, political and artistic practice shall all be set back another fifty years or so, or else would have missed out on crucial or even critical moments of human development.

So, upon looking at great thinkers and artists in the past who we all greatly value with insurmountable gratitude in today's economy and culture, those very same kinds of people in the eyes of mankind a hundred years from now are very much under threat due to the difficulties they face in our soul-crunching education system which sees its students only as future components of capital rather than potential radicals, alternative leaders, inventive hermits, new lights in the arts or potential geniuses.

Can anyone, no matter what background they are from, what their interests are, what their situation in life is or even what their disposition is, afford to take such a risk as to loose these crucial leaders in our future merely for the sake of churning out half-human half-robot/alien workers for the sake of big business? In these uncertain times where technological development is racing ahead of us and ethical, political and religious practice has to evolve at a pace never before seen on earth, can we really afford to make such a mistake?

Perhaps what I believe our educational system ought to be has become like God's Kingdom, living on mars and global equality: suited only for dreamers. But in the words of John Lennon, I'm sure *'I'm not the only one'*. And as for the individual tweak, will things change? – *'You suffer, you cry, you labour, you die, things will change, time will tell'* (Barbara Gaskin sings, in the band *Spirogyra*).

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Victor Rikowski recently started as a Music & Philosophy undergraduate at Roehampton University, London. He currently works part-time as a library assistant for the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea in London. This last year he has worked as a caterer at *The Golden Fleece*, a family pub in east London, and also had a temporary contract with TFPL which involved working as a records assistant at Lawrence Graham (Solicitors). Victor also produced a PowerPoint presentation for a keynote speech on human rights by Dr Michael Neary (University of Warwick) at Roehampton University in June 2006. Previous to that, Victor studied at Havering Sixth-Form College (2003-2005). His first article was published in January 2000, when he was 11 years old, in *The Wanstead and Woodford Guardian.* It was about his hopes and fears for the new millennium, and was entitled: *What will the future hold for us?* His article, *Future of Global Capitalism: Millionaires Ruling the Millions* was published in *Information for Social Change* No.14 (Winter 2000), and his poem *Perfect Sound* was published in *Information for Social Change* No.9 (Winter 2003). Victor has designed a number of covers for journals and books (including the cover for ISC No.14), and designed the logo for the Rikowski web site, The Flow of Ideas, entitled *The Ideas Sprites*. From 2000-2004, Victor was a member of the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, Junior and Senior Youth Drama Groups. He has also written a philosophical manuscript entitled, *The Quest for Perfect Sound: Beyond the Free Spirit.* He is currently working on a PowerPoint cartoon story, *The Ockress.* Victor is 19 years old, and lives in London. You can find out more about Victor at the 'About Us' section of The Flow of Ideas web site: http://www.flowideas.co.uk

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Education for a Socialist Future: An E-Dialogue

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This e-dialogue was conducted by email between 19th July and 8th August 2004, and between 6th March and 8th March 2005. Brief editing and some minor additions were made during September 2006.

[On General Education] Citizen Marx said there was a peculiar difficulty connected with this question. On the one hand a change of social circumstances was required to establish a proper system of education, on the other hand a proper system of education was required to bring about a change of social circumstances; we must therefore commence where we were. (Karl Marx, Speech on General Education to the General Council Meeting of the International Workingmen's Association, 17th August 1869)

Every time we criticise changes being made, we must suggest what changes are required instead. It is much harder to do... (Caroline Benn and Clyde Chitty, 1999, p.39)

GLENN: First of all Rich, I think that it's best to acknowledge that there are problems regarding the two of us talking about education in socialism. One is that there is no agreement regarding the nature of socialism, and so trying to outline an education for socialism is a non-starter. Secondly, it could be argued that a couple of teachers like us outlining 'the education of the future' runs against the notion that any programme for education in socialism (or in a transitional epoch) must be the result of *collective* and *democratic* discussions, educational practice and political action. Are we not just a couple of teachers, educational activists and thinkers spinning ideas about education in socialism: why should anyone take notice of what we say? A third point is that education in socialism, like socialism itself, is simply unimaginable. We are both locked into capitalist society, and our capacity to visualise anything beyond it, such as socialist society and an education for socialism is impossible. No doubt there are many other objections to what we are up to here. However, I would like to think there is a way through at least some of this. A friend of mine, Richard Shepherd (1993), argued that after the fall

of the Berlin Wall and the transformation of the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc from state socialist or state capitalist (take your pick) societies into a capitalist ones, folks would want detail about what socialism would be like. They would want to know more about what they were committing themselves too. Paula Allman (1999) has argued that at its best, and when carried out with reference to the spirits of Freire and Gramsci, radical pedagogy could give students and teachers a *glimpse* of what education in socialism was like. Indeed, Allman argued that we have to be able to do this if people are ever going to be convinced that socialist education and socialism are real possibilities and truly desirable futures. What are your thoughts on these issues, Rich?

RICH: Geeze, Glenn! Those are four big questions. I'd like to start by saying that I am honoured to share this discussion with you. Your works, Dave Hill's, Paula Allman's, all have been challenging, and in many ways formative, to me and for our colleagues in the Rouge Forum. Your work on the question of value, especially in education, is a breakthrough. I will try to respond to each of your vital questions in order, though clearly each thought flows into and from the other.

GLENN: Thanks Rich. The honour is mutual, and Dave Hill tells me about the important work going on in the Rouge Forum and about the annual conferences (which he's been to), which attract radical practitioners, education activists and critical educators. Of course, I follow things through your Rouge Forum updates by email, and your material on the war in Iraq has forced me to rethink the relations between imperialism and education. So what do you make of my points?

RICH: First, on socialism: I think it failed and we need to build a critical understanding of what went wrong. What will be can only come from what has been, with some imaginative leaps, so the huge struggle for socialism, which cost the lives of millions of honest people and which despite its failure still stands as a high-watermark of humanism, is key to understanding where we want to go.

GLENN: But Rich, this implies that we need to say what we think socialism was, or is – and where actually existing forms of socialism, or attempts at creating socialism, took a wrong turn.

RICH: Yes Glenn, and for me socialism was (1) the continuation of the state, in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as a site of class struggle (2) with the Party in the lead, purportedly acting in the interest of the working classes and the peasantry (3) as a result of a revolution (meaning I do not think there is a way to vote away capitalism), for the purpose of winning a more humane, free, egalitarian, and democratic world.

Because brevity must be a concern, let me compact history a great deal and say I believe the key efforts for revolution were the Paris Commune, the Russian revolution, the Chinese revolution, and the Cuban revolution. Each of these battles built on the other.

The Paris Commune, brief as it was, set up the principles of socialism in practical ways (smashing the existing state, no elected officials paid more than average workers, immediate recall of elected officials, a working – as opposed to a bureaucratic – government, quasi-soviets in power, the necessity of an armed people, etc.). The Russian revolution demonstrated that a socialist revolution could rise up in the midst of an imperialist war, face massive attacks, and sustain itself – if briefly. The Chinese revolution again demonstrated the relationship of imperialist war and revolution, and deepened (1) the idea of a mass party, (2) the role of a peoples' army, fairly egalitarian and democratic, and peoples' (guerrilla) war, (3) questions about dialectical materialism and making the philosophy of praxis a mass issue, and (4) the role of class struggle, and consciousness, post-revolution. The Cuban revolution showed that a revolution was possible even at the fingertips of the Empire, and the potential role of socialist education for a new kind of humanity.

Each revolution elevated human history. Yet each, I think, collapsed. On one hand, each failed to successfully address the production and appropriation of surplus value, to overcome capitalist economic relations. Each revolutionary socialist party was – at least initially – honest about this. The Soviets openly announced the New Economic Policy as a retreat to capitalism. The Chinese called their move to party-led capitalism New Democracy. Now they are joined by the Cubans in promoting Market Socialism. In each instance (other than the Paris Commune which was crushed), the leading party itself chose to return to capitalist economic relations, believing that it was necessary in order to create the abundance which would serve as a basis for more egalitarian policies – later.

On the other hand, each of the socialist parties conducted massive educational campaigns about the nature of capitalism (from surplus value to imperialist war and all in between) and the promise of socialism as a form of egalitarian democracy – where decision-making power, production and distribution would be held in the hands of those who did the work. While the people of Russia, China, and Cuba all did, in a variety of ways, protest the aggravating restoration of capitalist relations, and the establishment of the Party as a ruling class, it remains that for the most part capitalism was restored in full view of the people – who let it happen.

So, those of us who are interested in the promise of socialism, that is, the possibility of a more humane world run democratically, fairly, without exploitation, need to consider that what people learned from socialist education was not enough, that socialist education did not fully address either what people needed to know, or the critical pedagogical issue: how they needed to come to know it. One would, after all, influence the other.

GLENN: And what about my second point Rich, on why people should take any notice of us?

RICH: Well Glenn, to paraphrase the other Marx, Groucho, I am not sure I would want to pay much attention to anyone who paid too much attention to me. That said, however, let us look at concrete circumstances. This is a world whose major powers are promising their youth perpetual war. Inequality is booming, as are many forms of irrationalism (racism, nationalism, religious fundamentalism, sexism, etc). An international war of the rich on the poor is producing new forms of fascism on every continent. At the same time, the world is more united than ever before, through systems of production, exchange, transportation, technology, and communications. Everything is there for all to live fairly well, if we chose to share. This contradiction is not acceptable. Indeed, there is no alternative but to discover a path to get rid of capitalism, to create a humane world where people can truly lead reasonably free, creative, connected lives in sharing communities.

GLENN: How does education come into this project, Rich?

RICH: Education is key, not only in creating the base of understanding, through critical analysis of existing social relations, to offer a ground for a leap of imagination beyond daily life, but also because education, schooling, is now structurally pivotal to some of the most powerful imperial players, like the US.

GLENN: What are the relations between schools and imperialism in your view, Rich?

RICH: Well Glenn, in de-industrialised North America, I believe schools, not industrial work places nor the military nor the tax system, are the focal organising places of most peoples' lives. Of course, schools offer skill training (literacy, etc), and ideological training (nation building). Schools are huge markets. They involve billions of dollars of exchange (textbooks, salaries, architects, buses, buildings, etc), and they warehouse kids, a vital tax free corporate benefit in a society whose economy created one-parent families, or requires two people working to win the salary of what one person earned twenty-five years ago. Most importantly, schools are centres of hope which is probably the main reason people send their kids to us, strangers. Hope, though, can be real or false. In

any case, there are now more than 49 million children in US schools (more than 25 times the number of people in the military), and about 24 million of them will be eligible for an economic or political military draft in the next five years. Schools are crucial in creating youths that will die for imperial profits.

GLENN: But from what I've read of your work, teachers can make a difference, right?

RICH: Absolutely! What I've outlined above is not *all* that goes on in schools, or need go on. Good teachers swim against the current every day, teaching from the understanding that students are capable of comprehending and changing the world. Teachers do not have to be missionaries for capitalism and some, though far too few are not. These are, after all, *capitalist* schools and they are not semi-autonomous sites, though they are contested sites of class struggle, every day. Even so, it is capitalism that is semi-autonomous. Its schools are not.

So, education is key to things as they are, and to changing things to what they *might be*. Education is integral to sustaining any changes that might be won by poor and working people. Education has also been key to revolutionary projects in progress, as in South Africa, or perhaps more modestly, in the Mississippi Freedom Schools in the early 1960's, the Black Panther Party schools connected to their free breakfast programs, etc.

GLENN: But from what you've said Rich, although at present we learn and teach in capitalist schools, in capitalist society, things can change, too.

RICH: Yeah, things change: we can be sure of that. It's not unreasonable to say that while we do sit surrounded by the processes of capital, we know that this is not the highest or final stage of human development, and as we can, to some degree, become conscious of how things change, we can then influence what is next. Indeed, we will do that wittingly or not. The way out of capitalism must at once address the totality of human creativity and the particular methods that are used to imprison it. No one can reasonably suggest a grasp of the totality, or, hence, all of its components. But it is possible, recognising the simultaneously absolute and relative nature of truth, to go out the door and take informed, critically conscious, action.

GLENN: So Rich, coming round to the really tough one: what might an education system look like in a future society?

RICH: Well Glenn, I suppose that depends on how that society has developed, what it is and wants to be. If it is a society that has just experienced a successful uprising, education will look much different from a society that has achieved real community – as the earlier

society will certainly be under extreme internal and external military, economic, political, and social pressure. Yet Glenn, I think either education system must address the question Marx raises in his third Thesis on Feuerbach:

> *The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that it is essential to educate the educator himself. This doctrine must, therefore, divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society.*

> *The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice.* (Thesis 3, Marx, 1845, p. 615)

I believe this addresses the issues of *transformation* and *self-*transformation that educators face every day quite well.

GLENN: Yes Rich: social and individual transformation are not just 'something for the future'. Marx said that communism was the 'real movement' of society, not a fixed state of affairs, and these movements of social and individual transformation are something we can get stuck into today, now.

RICH: Both Georg Lukacs and Paulo Freire wrote highly significant last books. Lukacs' *Tailism and the Dialectic, in defence of history and class consciousness* (2000), drives home three key ideas that Freire's last work, *Pedagogy of Freedom* (1998), takes up as well. Freire's book, unfortunately, is available in English only in a terrible translation, and he died before he could finish the editing.

GLENN: So what's the connection, Rich?

RICH: In each instance, two things are clear from the two writers. First, overcoming the contradiction of subject and object – the self-actualising person making their own history, in circumstances they did not make – requires the conscious action of the critically curious subject. Second, justice demands organisation. Only through a revolutionary political organisation can such conscious actions become truly a *movement*. Third, within this, "revolutionary passion," is vital, key (Lukacs, 2000, p.67). However Glenn, I do not share Lukacs', or Freire's, sense of what the organisation should look like – or at least not Lukacs' tacit support of Stalin's Russia, and Freire's leadership in the Workers Party of Brazil, about to recreate all the old problems of socialism. Still, I think their common idea is correct. The *negation of the negation*, the idea that things change and what is new is always in re-creation, and that the profound optimism built within it requires organisation.

GLENN: What's the significance of organisation for you Rich?

RICH: It seems to me that organisation splits off opportunism,

which is all for the good – and is not necessarily the fountainhead of sectarianism. Opportunism, and related factors of racism, ignorance, and cowardice are the driving forces of the North American school work force. At issue is not to just identify those forces, but to fully understand and overcome them. That task demands organisation, which I have urged, should centre in schools in de-industrialised North America. What makes Marxist practice possible is organisational form. That task is before us, in embryo in groups like the Rouge Forum (Lukacs, 2000, p81; Gibson, 2003). Can we teach in classrooms each day with that in mind, despite the incredible Taylorist pressures of curricula regimentation and high-stakes testing? Can we teach in ways that give people a glimpse of a more egalitarian and democratic society, and also teach for revolutionary practice? Yes, I think we can.

GLENN: What makes you think this, Rich?

RICH: Well Glenn, teaching is one of the most, if not the most, free working class jobs left in North America, and I suspect in England as well.

GLENN: Yes, but we do have a National Curriculum in England, though the New Labour government is loosening it up. And we do have a severely oppressive schools inspection regime, with more testing of our kids than anywhere else, plus a highly competitive, marketised system – with new types of schools being added in the last few years. There is a highly regimented system of teacher training. This is not a land where freedom in classrooms can flourish easily. But the managerial representatives of capital for schooling in England (and I don't just mean head teachers and their deputies, and the local education authorities, but primarily the policy-makers in the Department for Education and Skills), can never control entirely teachers' labour. Labour can never ultimately be controlled in any sphere of work. Our capacity to labour (labour-power) resides within us, ourselves as labourers, and under our will – which gives us a certain kind of power, and poses problems for capital and its representatives.

RICH: Of course Glenn, schools in England may be a tougher proposition. Working as teachers in schools, as on any job, we are restricted by the bosses' efforts to replace our thinking critical minds with their profit-seeking minds. But if we see this as settled by power, and determine how to get some (through close ties with parents, kids, other school workers and community people, through organisations and press like the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, etc), we can still get enough clout to keep our ideals and still teach.

GLENN: A key issue is how to use the freedoms that we still have within the classroom, and try to maximise them for social

transformation.

RICH: Yes, so what might we teach about and what can we do right now, as students, parents and school workers? We can fight to restore the central issues of life to the methods and substance of schooling. The central issues of life, I suggest, are love (sensuality and reproduction), work (labour and production), knowledge (the struggle for what is true) and freedom (not freedom by being apart, but by being more connected to others – in a community of caring people).

GLENN: How can we do that Rich?

RICH: We can do what teachers do fairly well: construct reason, and connect that with what teachers rarely understand: power. Constructing reason, which is a form of power, means in part having close personal ties with people over time – as any good teacher knows that the gateway to changing a mind is affect. Nothing replaces close personal (and critical) ties, which go directly to good knowledge of terrain, as Iraq and Vietnam demonstrate.

GLENN: Perhaps you could elaborate on why teachers' power is so crucial, Rich.

RICH: Well, it's not just power in relation to organising for big events, public events (demos, protests, etc.), though it is also that. But the more power we have, by organising the chess club, by being a coach, by taking on unwanted tasks, the more freedom we have to teach what reason is, critical thinking, that is, dialectical materialism: how to think of things as they change, the view that we can understand and change the world. So, we teach the scientific method of knowledge, in social studies and physics.

GLENN: And there's an ethical dimension here too, a question of *values*, I believe.

RICH: This is crucial: we teach love, both as a fact of sensual pleasure, and a question of species survival, evolution, and we discuss how sensual love is distinct from exploitative sex, how we can tell lovers from Bill and Monica. With our power and freedom, we restore the study of work, labour, production, labour history, Marx – and revolution, to the curriculum, showing how over time people have made gains, wittingly and not so wittingly, and how we have been betrayed as well. Anything but class, as James Loewen says, is the rule of teaching in US schools, and we need to get the power to break the rule – which the work of the Rouge Forum demonstrates is possible.

GLENN: What about the social context in which schools, teachers and students operate?

RICH: Clearly, we must address the immediate issues in schools:

curricula regimentation, high stakes tests, militarism, demands for cutbacks and de-funding via marketisation. We should show the historically factual ties of these issues to the needs of an imperialist society. What is our immediate goal in this? I think our goal should be, simultaneously, the ability to control our workplaces, schools, in conjunction with kids and parents – and revolution. The struggle for control of the processes and products of work is incessant and necessary on any job, and it should be an understanding of ours. Control of the work place is proved by our ability to shut it down. Between today and shutting it down, we should lead boycotts of the tests, protests, drive the recruiters off the campuses – urge people into more and more direct, self-actualising, collective action against the boss – and against capitalism. To not make the connection is to build nothing that will last. This is not a call for action that is manufactured out of the air. These actions have already happened. Our job is to make sense of them, to encourage and organise more of them – to lead.

GLENN: Becoming *educators* in this much wider and deeper sense that you have outlined.

RICH: Yes, I think we should shut down the schools, as many as we can, as often as we can. Does that mean I want to destroy public, or more exactly not so 'public', education as no nation has a truly public system? No. It means I want to overturn the social relations that make unpublic education rotten, and I want to build a lasting social movement that can create a better world. If we should do that, we will have a responsibility to begin, and maintain, freedom schools in the midst of very serious struggle. I will leave the kind of schooling, and many other unanswered questions that might be pending here, to our discussion.

GLENN: Rich, I would venture to say something about the *kind* of schooling we have and might have for a socialist future. If schooling is an aspect of the 'real movement of society' (communism), then what does this entail? I would argue that there are at least three moments within this movement. First, in relation to capitalist schooling, and in what some such as Geraldine Thorpe here in England have called education in the transitional epoch, the key point is *critique*. This would be the critique of capitalist society, its forms of schooling and training, its markets, and so on. This first moment attempts to push to the fore the *negativity* of all that passes for the 'positive' in capitalist society, especially in education and training. For example, mainstream education researchers and theorists here in the UK are all too quick to grasp the latest 'good idea' emanating from Policyland: the learning society, social capital, personalised learning and so on. Though under New Labour there have been so many of these a reluctant scepticism has developed.

But this misses the point. These policies sound appealing in a way. Who could be against lifelong learning, for example? But in capitalist society these 'good ideas' can only ever be perverted and inverted moments (the opposite) of what they purport to represent. Thus, as I have explained in the case of lifelong learning, in capitalist society this is transformed into a kind of 'learning unto death' in the form of labour-power production. So, the moment of critique is essential – and we need to encourage our students to be critical of all aspects of society. But if critique was all we had to offer, that would be insufficient. And for the second moment Rich, I would like to draw on something that you mentioned earlier, and which Peter McLaren (2000) has talked about in relation to Paulo Freire: *love* – which I think, in its broadest sense, must be linked to *human needs*. An education for the future must be about meeting human needs: not just of the students, but also of the communities in which they live, and beyond. Of course, we must be on our guard that these needs are expressed and considered in truly democratic sites and that the students' and teachers' efforts to meet them are not hijacked by capital or the state. But this may be less of a danger if the state has been smashed already and capital is a battered social force, on the wane! Yet I would not want people to get the impression that the education of the future is just about critique and educating to meet, and in fact meeting, human needs. It must not be entirely negative nor self-sacrificial, but should also point to the *realm of freedom* – the freedom that Marx was talking about in his brief sketch of the communist impulse in the *Economic and Philosophical Notebooks of 1844*. The education of the future has also to speak to desires, wants and dreams.

RICH: Critique (through negation), love, and the realm of freedom; that is not only a fine ground for any classroom, but for revolution. In our current epoch, resistance and the revolutionary struggle are keys to freedom, and to understanding. So, as you say, these moments work in relationship to each other, to the whole of capitalism, and they can operate in similar ways in the everyday classroom as well.

GLENN: Now, I'm not saying that there are three 'stages' in the education of the future: for critique, for human needs, and for opening the realm of freedom – that correspond to capitalism and the transitional epoch, socialism and communist society. *They should all be present in some sense*, though the emphasis would change over time, given successful social transformations. They must all be present in order to give students and teachers a glimpse of the *alternative* social universe and modes of thinking, creativity, learning and being that might make us *want* this alternative society, and its radically different forms of teaching and learning. We must be able to call forth these 'real visions' to show people that *another*

education, another world is possible. This is what Paula Allman talks about, and set about doing, and in fact did in her work at the University of Nottingham (see Allman, 2001, chapters 5 and 6). It can be done. Within education, we must amalgamate the three moments. Of course, we face this task in the light of the necessity for *resistance* in two senses. First, we shall have to resist attempts by the state, parents, some students, some of our own colleagues, local education authorities, the inspectorate, etc., etc. to stop us from doing this. And your previous point about organisation is crucial here Rich. Secondly, we shall need to resist the imperatives of capitalist schooling. These include the social production of labour-power (human capital) for capitalist profit-making, transforming schools into sites of profitability (which is gaining ground fast in England, see Rikowski, 2003) and commercialism – where schools are sites for advertising, branding and gaining market shares. But the form of resistance will change in social transformation, and I don't have space (or time) to expand on that point.

RICH: I'll build just a little on your vital thought here: resistance. I think we need to re-establish that resistance is a major key to learning – as critique and negation – and there is really no alternative to resistance as every working person is going to have to fight to live. It makes sense to rebel. It is right to rebel. And through rebellion, solidarity, and egalitarianism, we can learn our way out of capital's trap – toward freedom, creativity, community or as we have said; toward love (Gibson 2003b).

GLENN: The youth in schools will resist anyway, and you can see this here in England where we have the most-tested school kids but also, according to some research reported in the *Times Educational Supplement* as few months ago, the world's worst behaved school kids (see Slater, 2004). I don't think those facts are unconnected. The exclusion rates (for gross bad behaviour) and truancy rates are also high, with the New Labour government have instituted a series of truancy 'initiatives' in the past few years, including cracking down on the parents of truants with fines and in a few cases jail sentences. However, more politically significant forms of resistance have also occurred in the last few years: the school pupil strikes and walk outs against the war in Iraq, and also strikes in support of teachers who have dared to speak out against management policies and poor working conditions in some schools. The key point is how this resistance is *expressed*. Kids who get excluded from schools or truants have not, to date, formed groups that have challenged the constitution of contemporary life in schools. Truants, of course sometimes hang out in groups, and in the London Borough of Newham, where I live, the cops carry out periodic 'truancy sweeps' and round these groups up and ship them back to school. And there are billboards urging 'good citizens' to report on truants to the

police! But truants have not formed any kind of movement of opposition to the constitution of the school in England, as far as I know.

On the other hand, the kids striking against the war in Iraq did have a certain level of organisation – which even the mainstream press acknowledged when they advocated that the 'ringleaders' should be heavily stamped on. These strikes against the Iraqi war caused massive panic in mainstream media and political circles. The situation was compounded by the fact that Citizenship was inserted into the National Curriculum in 2002 and some right-wingers made the connections and called for the abolition of this 'dangerous' new subject. But from what I've read and experienced, tame and domesticating citizenship classes had nothing to do with it! Between the invasion of Afghanistan and the build up to the war in Iraq I taught in schools in east London and Essex. Muslim kids were incensed against what was happening, but many non-Muslims were too. These kids didn't need citizenship classes to stir 'em up!

RICH: And there is always something that can be learned from resistance, even mis-guided resistance. I think it is nearly always better to resist, than not, even though that must be tempered by a long-term outlook, good judgement. If we take a broad view, the Iraqi resistance to the US invasion, as mis-led as it may be, demonstrates to the world the strategic weakness of what was considered the most powerful nation in the history of the world, the weakness of the looter who is unable to make close friendly ties with the people. If we move back into school, we see teachers struggling for freedom every day, the freedom to use their good judgement, applied to specific situations and kids, which is surely a foundation of teaching. Last spring, 2004, I watched a young teacher refuse to force a child to take a high-stakes test. She did not have tenure, and she was very afraid. But she knew that the child's mother had died that week, and to impose the test would clearly be child abuse. The principal finally retracted what had been a direct order. I wrote down here comment to me after her interchange with the principal, "That was the first time I felt like a whole person since I got here." This teacher realized that she had to have some power (which in this case she gained from passion and the sheer strength of her case), to get the freedom, to use her good judgement. Teachers who do not really grasp the value they create have a hard time decoding their incredible potential power – and so they have less freedom.

GLENN: Yes Rich, in the UK, even mainstream writers and commentators are beginning to question why teachers should 'just follow orders' and try to do what New Labour, the Department of Education and Skills and Ofsted (the national inspectors for schools)

tell them. Sue Palmer wrote an article in the *Times Educational Supplement* in September 2004 (Palmer, 2004) that argued that teachers can 'say no' to misguided educational reforms and claim back some of their dignity and professional standing, though the idea of teachers being 'professionals' often brings with it a chasm between teachers and parents, students and other educational workers. More recently, Phil Revell (an ex-teacher himself) has written in *Education Guardian* about how education ministers have decided on the nature of the curriculum and teacher training with hardly any reference to the views of teachers. In the process, they are charged with acting according to government diktats in the classroom, with Revell arguing that they are perhaps more like parrots than professionals. He quotes one primary school head teacher, who thought that new teachers coming out of training are basically better than ever, but have limitations nevertheless: "They are really good practitioners, but in a one-dimensional way. It's all about the [official] schemes of work, the literacy and numeracy hours. The idea that there might be ways to teach these things that lie outside those programmes is heresy to most of these teachers" (cited in Revell, 2005, p.3). So, they are good technicians but only in a very narrow sense insofar as they follow the official views of what teaching is all about. Yet Revell does not seem to like teachers when they band together in trade unions either. He thinks that teachers should constitute a 'real' profession along the lines of doctors and lawyers in the UK.

RICH: But from what I've read of your work Glenn, I've noticed that teachers have a much deeper significance for you. Perhaps you could expand on this a bit.

GLENN: Yes Rich, they do**.** All this stuff about professionalism kind of misses the point. For me, the key point is that teachers and trainers are involved in producing the unique, living commodity on which the existence and maintenance of the capitalist system rests: labour-power, the capacity to labour. As skills, forms of knowledge but also attitudes (especially work and social attitudes) and personality traits and modes of behaviour exist within workers as labour-power teachers and trainers are highly significant. They develop and nurture these skills and so forth in a definite, institution-bound and intentional manner through forms of the *social production of labour-power* in contemporary capitalism. Labour-power is transformed into labour in the capitalist labour process and value is incorporated in commodities produced by this labour. After a certain point, in the working day, week or whatever, value over-and-above that represented in the *wage* is produced, surplus-value (i.e. unpaid labour). Out of this surplus-value come tax, rent and other deductions plus the value necessary to start the production cycle over once again. Also, profits come out of this

surplus-value too. For employers and representatives of capital (managers), the *quality* of labour-power is important, *ceteris paribus*. Higher quality labour-power will result in the line between necessary labour (value as represented in the wage) and surplus labour (constituted through surplus, unpaid labour) being re-drawn to favour the latter as value constituting the wage is *produced quicker*. So Rich, teachers are 'working for capital' to the extent that they enhance the quality of labour-power whether they realise it or not, or care about it or not. This is one of the tragedies of labour: where teachers' apparent positivity, as they increase 'educational standards', becomes a perverse *negative* aspect of their social existence when contextualised within the social universe of capital. However, in nurturing and developing the one commodity, labour-power, whose expenditure in the labour process keeps the whole system going teachers and trainers attain a certain *social power*. They have crucial inputs into the constitution of labour-power, and there are always possibilities for subverting the process through *educating for values that are antithetical to capitalist production* and all it engenders: social inequalities, social divisions of 'race', gender, sexuality, physical capabilities, war, imperialism and so on. Of course, students can also resist being transformed into labour-power conducive to producing value and surplus-value too.

RICH: Yes Glenn, but as I understand it student resistance does not always make sense. Paul Willis did a fine job showing us that long ago, in *Learning to Labor* (Willis, 1981). Too often, kids resist by deciding that rejecting the struggle for knowledge, critique as you rightly put it, is rubbish, not in their interest.

GLENN: That's true. And we shall always have to keep Paul Willis' tremendous study in view to remind us of this. The notion of student resistance is double-edged. Some forms of it count against socialist transformation. So in Willis' study the Lads' rejection of the value of intellectual work meant that their penetrations (as Willis called them) of school and work realities was always going to be limited by their own local knowledge and rootedness in their communities. Plus their forms of resistance were underpinned by sexist and racist values and outlooks which ran against any claims some might hold that these guys were in the socialist vanguard. Yet in the last couple of years in the UK school students have shown a willingness to engage in acts of resistance, or what the Leeds May Day Group (2004) 'moments of excess' that do seem to have a wider and deeper importance for resistance to capital. I've already noted the protest against entry into the Iraqi war by school students. But they have also been involved in other struggles that generate hope. For example, action to support sackings of respected teachers (e.g. a report in the *Daily Mail* in December last year), strikes against low quality education (see Leprowska, 2004),

and strikes in support of classroom teachers against the policies of unpopular head teachers (see Hawkins, 2004). I've also noticed a rise in the number of reports in the *Times Educational Supplement* international pages of students striking and boycotting exams – for example, the recent school students' boycott of exams in Norway (Buscall, 2005). But these events can be read as disconnected and always liable to be countered by incorporation or repression, perhaps just at the point when the flame of resistance is burning most brightly, Rich. The issue of organisation seems important at this point.

RICH: Yes Glenn and now I would like to come back to the question of organization, and tie that to learning from resistance, as well as to your idea of critique, and the question of meeting human needs. Many of my friends who guided my work for years, like Marty Glaberman and others, people for whom I have the deepest respect—people who lived exemplary lives for freedom, against capitalism—believed that it is solely *within resistance that people learn*, that within resistance, there is inherently revolution. Since, "work sucks," resistance is necessary, and so, then, is revolution. In some of their work, they set up a practical and philosophical axiom: no idea can occur to anyone before it takes place in social practice. I think there is a parallel element in some of Paulo Freire's work, in that he takes trust of the people as an element of faith—though again, Freire clearly believed in revolutionary organizations, while Marty did not (see also Karl Korsch, and Raya Dunayevskaya).

GLENN: Perhaps you could expand on this some, Rich.

RICH: Right, Glenn. Now, it may be that facts exist before they are apprehended, but it remains that there are those who comprehend their daily reality so well that they can imagine something else; Marx and the transitory nature of class struggle, for example, or Archimedes and calculus. Imagination, key to any classroom, always coupled with wonder, is built on critique, and, perhaps, leaps out of it. Ideas can jump ahead of daily life, even its careful critique – without which there is nothing. I think this is a philosophical and practical demonstration that leads, again, to the question of *organization*. That imaginative leap, jumping up out of analysis, is not going to occur to everyone all at once, not even over time. So, organization makes sense...

GLENN: If I could just interject here, Rich. I think that one of the problems the Leeds May Day Group (2004) were struggling with is that organisation can dampen down the potential for 'moments of excess', moments that exceed aspects of what is taken as the 'reality' of capitalist social life and simultaneously challenge it by posing alternatives. They argue against a form of politics that becomes like work, with its notion of efficiency, directing or

resources and targets and so on (see p.9). Yet they also note that organisation is needed to open up 'other spaces for us to move into' (p.12). The dialectic between moments of excess and creative organisation is difficult to live, to *feel* (though maybe not so much when you're in its matrix, so to speak), but crucial according to the folk in the Leeds May Day Group.

RICH: Organization allows ideas to be distilled, recreated, in part in response to human needs, understanding that *truth does not lie in the minds of a central committee*, but in the interaction of an organization and the people, and their circumstances. Organization makes sense in school, and in revolution. Teachers who want to resist in schools are likely to be in the minority. To survive as critical educators, revolutionaries, they will need friends, meaning they will need to systematically set up networks of people they can connect with, both to be more creative, and to simply share bitterness. On the front of social change, revolution, it is quite clear that in order to overturn (not just meet and hold, but overturn) a ruthless, highly organized, hierarchical, enemy, justice is going to demand organization.

GLENN: Of course, Rich, for teacher-revolutionaries, education activists and Left academics it is often the case that they will be isolated and so might feel and actually be powerless or worse (vilified, at risk job-wise and so on). I've certainly been in that position. When I worked at a place called Epping Forest College in Essex from 1985 – 1994 I was fortunate to have a few socialists to work with, but we were very much in a minority. What we said about the direction of what we call in the UK 'further education' was not popular with mainstream teachers at the College. Yet much of it came to pass and life for teachers in the whole further education sector after April 1993 (when colleges became 'incorporated' and so competing against other colleges) deteriorated: new contracts from hell, rampant managerialism, increase in corruption, the drive for money over education provision and a lowering of relative pay rates and so on. Indeed, the friends I worked with at Epping Forest College have all left working in the further education sector, though we meet up three or four times a year in London. In 1994, in the first year of working in the new further regime (with struggles over the new contracts, staff appraisal and other issues), I decided to join the Hillcole Group of Radical Left Educators, founded by Dave Hill and Mike Cole in 1989. There we had socialist educators and activists working in various sectors (schools, further education and training and in higher education and education research). This helped me get a broader handle on events, tactics and education politics. It was *organisation*, but a form of organisation that, in some ways and to some extent, enabled us to plan for critical educational activities and to share experiences. Kids need some

kind of organisation too. Truancy, acts of resistance to capitalist schooling in small groups can be creative and even educational (some of my friends were truants when at school and claimed they learnt more by not going to school). Michael Howard, the UK Conservative Party leader [now ex-leader], used to bunk off school and play snooker (a game similar to pool), so that argument obviously has its limitations!

RICH: Kids who have learned to dislike learning in school have not been shown how to imagine how to live in another way, and, as I think you indicate, they have not learned that their critique can help them not only understand the mire of much of daily life, but to transform it.

GLENN: Organisation conducive to generating moments of excess, and these on an expanding scale, is vital for teachers and students, and both in combination – and must relate to human needs.

RICH: Yes Glenn, now to continue to connect with your stream, that organization will surely have to address human needs. I stress the human side of that. What the teacher I mentioned previously said is, I think, on the mark. She was *human* in her *resistance*. We cannot be free and whole except in the struggle against the whole of the processes of capital. In this case, I am trying to reposition the idea of the whole human, which is written all over Marx, in a different light. I don't think that freedom, wholeness, has to exist beyond necessity. It seems to me that it can exist in revolution, in the *process* of getting beyond necessity. I felt freer while I sat in jail as the result of an anti-war demonstration than I felt when I was working in the Ford Rouge plant. I know this is a stretch, and that, on the contrary, my friends who have been held in the 18th century Richmond Hill prison in Grenada, the Grenada 17 falsely charged and jailed for the last 20 years, are not more free than me. But I also know that there is a great release of freedom and creativity inside resistance, and that is what I see as being the basis of being free and whole for us today. Even in the little joys of daily classroom life, where teachers routinely teach kids to put on "ole massa," the principal, who, on an official visit, is given a Potemkin Village of a lesson plan by students and the teacher alike, that kind of tricksterism, can be done, and give kids a sense of the fact that the "truth of the Master is in the Slaves."

GLENN: Of course, we need to relate resistance to human needs.

RICH: So, now, to human needs: I think the main human need we can really address, and deliver, is the need to exist within a caring community, where people's creativity is honoured, where humility is linked to forgiveness for learning, making mistakes – and where forms of exploitation are not honoured, as in racism or sexism: close personal ties. We can offer that in a classroom, and in a

revolutionary organization.

GLENN: These things are important; we have to *feel* the transformation, to have an emotional bond with it. Yet crass materialists might point to increases in GDP or more TV channels or yet more shit that mobile phones can do. In socialism we'll have more and better mobile phones!

RICH: I am not at all so sure we can offer people who we urge to make a revolution to overcome capital's relentless demands for surpluses, in labour or value, that they will quickly have more stuff. For many, probably most, it seems to me that we won't have more stuff for quite some time, even basics. We are just getting a glimpse of what capital's personifications are willing to do to protect their privileges, as in Chechnya, Iraq, Afghanistan, and, back a little, to what was probably three million dead in Vietnam and an effort to defoliate the region. Conrad's fearsome "Heart of Darkness," mantra, "Exterminate the brutes," still plays too well today. I do not doubt that ruling classes will bomb their own cities, poison their own water, blow up their own oil wells, i.e., smash everything they can in the belief that the absence of abundance will recreate their class, hoping inequality will rise from scarcity. We must take that away from them.

GLENN: As educators we must argue that we want to create a *new* world, not draw a parallel universe which is jammed with more gadgets than the old one. We pose the possibility of values in a world, today's world that incorporates social drives that deny values but *impose value*.

RICH: Our countermove, which really is an overcoming, an overturning as in the sense of soil being shovelled, turned up, ground up, given new life – is to promise a humane world, and from that, stuff that can someday take us beyond necessity. It follows that an organization of people who want to deal with this issue will need an ethic, which could be negative, as in, "It is wrong to exploit people," or in the positive, "from each according to their commitment to each according to need." That can happen in an organization, and in a classroom too – just as classrooms can be conducted without rewards of pizza parties and stars on the forehead, the only reward being the struggling for what is true, itself. Still, the question concerning what people need to know, and how they need to know it in order to win liberation from tyranny is still largely unanswered.

GLENN: And that is where radical, critical educators have a key role to play, I feel. What knowledge is worthwhile is typically left to bourgeoisie educational philosophers, education ministers or the so-called experts in the press to pontificate on. Struggles over what is socially useful or even valid knowledge are much to the fore now.

I'm aware, through Internet sources that Left professors in the US have to watch what they say in lectures otherwise in some cases members of the fundamentalist Christian groups (often backed by right-wing staff and media interests) mount legal cases against them. I guess this will spread to the UK. Here, of course, we have no written constitution or tenure (abolished by the Thatcher administration) to offer even the flimsiest protection to higher education staff. Furthermore, Francis Beckett, in a recent article in the *New Statesman* indicated how lesbian and gay groups on university campuses in London and Manchester have suffered harassment, and some gay activists have even received death threats from religious groups (see Beckett, 2005). These culture wars are becoming intense, and tense.

RICH: And at some point, we will need to deal with the question of violence. I think we should abhor violence, especially deadly violence, as it is a clear admission of hopelessness, an ending of possibilities. In a way, this is a binary negation that is, at once, unavoidable and unacceptable. We should try to overcome the violence of authoritarianism in the classroom, and in the classroom we can usually do that by meeting violence with care, critique, and community. Outside the classroom, however, reason will not always overcome the 101st Airborne Division, now busy in Iraq, but unleashed on my hometown, Detroit, in 1967. The Masters will never adopt the ethics of the Slaves, so our transformation, if it is to be thoroughgoing, needs to find a way through that. How can we create harmony in the midst of all perceived disharmony in contemporary capitalism? We can learn from history. I think the Chinese Red Army, and the Vietnamese liberation movement tried to figure that out, perhaps unsatisfactorily, but credit the effort. Both were, after all, military operations that, at the same time, grasped the entire political-economic implications of their work. From what I read the Chinese treated prisoners very well, trying to win them over, and frequently sent them back to their units to encourage mass desertions. The Vietnamese conducted mass propaganda with US troops, which had something to do with the levels of desertions, refusals to fight, fraggings, etc. But, I have to admit that at least on the face of it, in both instances the convincing side of the case was made by the Chinese Red Army, and the Vietnamese liberation movement, shooting those who opposed them. This is how serious this is. We are talking about people killing other people – as will surely happen if capital just continues to run wild, and which may come to an end if we can revolutionize it, but frankly I believe we will see World War Three first.

GLENN: I'm not sure it will come to that! If I was a betting guy (and I used to be, on horse racing, when I was younger) I would back revolution and social transformation winning out. Of course,

we need a theory of the forces making for the implosion of capital's social universe. But I'm sure that this theory will not be of the usual kind (forces and relations of production clashing, and all the typical stuff). I also feel that a *politics of human resistance* will emerge: a politics that *resists* forms of education and training that seek to reduce human existence to labour-power, to resist education that functions to contain the future of the human, to resist education that attempt to limit, deny and curtail 'moments of excess' and socially transformative actions. Classrooms, training institutions, schooling processes and the academy will have important roles to play in such a politics. It would be a politics of a truly new kind that would focus on struggles over capital's weakest link: labour-power!

RICH: Even so, we both know classrooms are not revolutionary organizations, and should not be, so where one begins and the other starts might lead to an interesting exchange.

GLENN: Indeed it would! The boundaries between education, production and the political are dissolving rapidly. As Meatloaf said: 'Everything Louder than Everything Else!' (see Rikowski, 2006). Hyper-neoliberalism is eating itself!

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Where has youth radicalism gone? Political participation and democratic pedagogy

An e-dialogue between Alpesh Maisuria and Spyros Themelis

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Abstract

The idea for this e-dialogue came after a stimulating seminar we attended in 2004. This was supposed to be an academically rigorous paper about political participation and critical pedagogy. However, this is not how it has turned out. This final version appears to be more in the style of an alcoholically induced rant. We make no apologies for this!

Context

When Tony Blair and his New Labour Party came into power in 1997, many people in England and elsewhere sighed in relief that the country could leave its Conservative past behind after 18 years. However, the optimism of the early days would be short-lived and it was soon to be followed by disillusionment and alienation.

The continuing deregulation, privatisation and liberalisation of the labour market, the takeover of publicly owned services by corporations running them on contracts for profit, and the increasingly close ties between the economic and the political elites has facilitated and fuelled the deepening of inequalities between rich and poor. Flexible economy, progressive taxation, free market zones, Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and, of course, the so-called 'war on terror' are only some of the current buzzwords that indicate the governing principles of the New Labour government. The foundations of the free-market economy that were laid consistently by Thatcherism are now being fully developed by New Labour. Notions such as quality of life, collective rights and humane working conditions seem to have become obsolete dodos, objects of interest

only to the historians of politics. The result is the dehumanisation of the majority for the sake of a privileged minority.

In such a climate, it is not surprising that some Labour Cabinet members (who then became former Cabinet members), Ministers (who then became ex-Ministers), MPs, and crucially Trade Unionists, distanced themselves from the ruling New Labour clique and its post-97 politics. What is more, and of greater significance in these times, is the increasing abstention from political participation of the majority of the population, as exemplified at the last national elections in May 2005. Thus, slightly over a half of those entitled to vote did not do so, which raises serious questions about the legitimacy of the government let alone its ability to act as a representative of the majority of its electorate. This is the canvass of the discussion that follows.

The conversation

Alpesh: Spyros, Professor Dave Hill, our comrade, respected educationalist, former Labour Leader of East Sussex County Council Labour Group, and one-time Labour Party election candidate, recently announced his retirement from the Labour Party after 44 years of membership. This made me think about my involvement in politics and parliamentary affiliation. In fact, let me rephrase this; the seemingly lack of opportunity to be involved.

With the inextricable historical links the Fabians Society have had with the working class labour movement, in 2003 I joined the Young Fabians with the hope of hooking up with some young leftie-comrades. To say I was disappointed is an understatement. The Young Fabians I found were pin striped suited city bankers, espousing the New Labour rhetoric, whilst in private expressing disgruntlement at reforms that are the ash of Thatcher's cigar – so where have all the young Socialists and Marxists gone?

Spyros: Alpesh, your concerns about the lack of opportunities to get involved in politics are not to be seen as a personal issue: I've been struggling for quite a while to understand where it comes from, if it is a new phenomenon, which groups of people are affected and, as Lenin used to ask, 'who benefits'. From discussions I've been having in Greece (where it is also perceived as a relatively new phenomenon) and in the UK I started thinking that there are, broadly speaking two kinds of reactions to this phenomenon.

Firstly, there's the 'blame-it-all reaction; the 'we-are-all-responsible' kind of attitude. Appealing as this may be it masks the roots of the issue (for some it is not a problem at all, so let me approach it inductively and try to support my case before I call it a 'problem'). This stream of thought lends itself to a pathologisation of society, in that, symptoms are treated as the causes, the recipient of the action (or lack of it) swaps place with the omnipotent and invisible motivator.

The second reaction to the widespread lack of political participation is one that could be encapsulated in the 'blame-the-youth' phrase. The rationale here is easier to follow: proponents adopt an evolutionary idea of society where we are divided into generations of succeeding and preceding occupants of positions in society. Attitudes are distributed according to membership to groups in society which correspond to biological generations. Characteristics are then attached to each one of these groups with easiness, i.e. the older generations 'care' while the young people are disengaged from politics, indifferent to wider social, political, economic, environmental and other issues: "they just don't care, that's their attitude nowadays", "they are all the same; it's a sign of our times" are some of the favourite mottos in this kind of parlance.

However, there is still a question lurking: who are we looking for? The young Marxists and the young Socialists? The youth, generally speaking, who are interested in politics (or is this same question)?

Alpesh: You make some very pertinent points here, and ask 'who are we looking for?' But should the question not be: 'who is looking (out?) for us and our ideals?'

Spyros: Your question raises issues of identification and partisanship: who is 'us' and who is 'them'? If these are two distinct groups, what sets them apart? What makes 'us' visible and what 'them'? Or, is it the invisibility of youth politics that allows the emergence of the 'us' and the 'them'? Does it matter who sees us and if it does, to whom? To see a group or an individual equals to exist? To exist equals to act? To act equals to act ethically, in solidarity, mindfully?

Ontological questions aside: I'm tempted to say, running the risk of being over-simplistic, that if you don't act (as a member of a group, collectively) ethically, in solidarity, mindfully, and so forth, then you don't exist!! But which act is ethical, in solidarity, mindful and so on?

So let's go back to the identity question. The Greek poet, Odysseas Elitis, said: "I am your place/or I may be nobody/but I can become whatever you want me to become"! The same we could propose as young socialists (the 'us' of the previous dualism): we want to become what society needs us to become, unlike the pin striped suited bankers who know well in advance what they want to become, simply because they know how to play the game of power and have invested heavily in climbing up the greasy pole of social hierarchy.

Alpesh: Wow! Talk about answering a question with a question! You are right to identify issues of identification from the nature of my question. Professor Carrie Paechter talks about language, and simply using the term "us" insinuates that there must be an 'other' – which indirectly marginalises and creates allegiances to causes. It's Bush's and Blair's crazy mantra: "You're either with us or you are *against* us". For them there are the absolutes of: good (of which they are supreme), and evil of which everyone one else must be by default.

I suppose when I talk about 'them' I mean the ruling class and capitalist class, and they are identified quite simply by the visible [e.g. the WTO] and invisible [e.g. the old boys' network in education] hegemonic power relation that exists in all sections of the global society. I'm not implying that all Fabians are part of the ruling class, but they are part of the establishment by toeing the New Labour line – New Labourites *are* part of the ruling class.

On the one hand, I do think it is important to be seen, not in Hollywood heroic terms obviously, but a figurehead that exemplifies resistance and critical consciousness as opposed to those who are unhappy (I would argue that we are all unhappy emotionally and physically in a capitalist society) but continued to subscribe to the status quo. This is the essence of existing.

I do acknowledge your hesitations about overextending your point about acting in solidarity, though. It could be strongly argued that every revolutionary movement needs just one person to carry the flag of dissent manifesting a united discourse of counter-hegemonic action.

I like your point about "playing the game of power and progression". I would strongly put a case forward to suggest that the ruling class actually do not want all young people involved in the political process at Westminster Village. As Paul Willis (1977) has exemplified in his excellent book, *Learning to Labour: how working class kids get working class jobs*, social divisions are a part of the

political elite's ambitions – in fact I would suggest that political divisions are a part of the political agenda of most ministers. Thus, despite espousing the rhetoric that class does not exist, and for example, the racialised gendered fraction of the working class do not have sticky floors and glass ceilings. Discounting class (ruling/capitalist, working class, racialised and gendered working class, or political class) is political masturbation of the highest order!

Spyros: I want to deal with education and the "us" within this field as well as with issues of social class, that you rightly identify as the underpinnings of most of our contemporary social anomalies. To begin with, let's consider the issue of the alleged apathy or disengagement from politics of the youth. Cross-national research showed that 63% of the new and young voters did not vote in the national elections, in May 2005. Furthermore, recent research also demonstrated that it is lack of critical pedagogy that lays behind youth abstention, indeed a very intriguing finding (Ipsos MORI, 2005).

When this finding was presented at the 'Marxism and Education: Renewing Dialogues VII' seminar many participants seemed to be sceptical as it implied, according to them, a critique on those primarily involved in the young people's education (and pedagogy): their teachers!! Two issues are raised here: firstly, at a theoretical level, we moved beyond the old-Marxist concept of alienation to explain abstention. Of course, alienation still has a lot to tell us but I believe that we cannot use blanket concepts to explain social phenomena, unless we have previously exemplified what we mean by them, showed how, when and why they emerge (the historical conditions, in other words) and finally to show in which contemporary cases they can be applied.

Secondly, about the implicit criticism on those entrusted the formal education of the young generation. I can understand why those criticised are defensive. Most of those who did put up their guards were educators themselves. They know better than anyone how hard it is to give – day in, day out – their creative energy and passion and yet to have to sustain such criticisms that may be perceived as cancelling out their input.

Richard Sennett, in his *Respect* (2004) book, argues that people configure their worth through work. In our capitalist societies our public 'face' is interwoven if not primarily defined by our occupation: our social standing, self and mutual esteem, recognition, respect and status are all linked to one another and are of immense significance to one's well-being. What is more, all these notions are

underpinned by our place in the division of labour thus they also have a social dimension which supersedes the personal. Inescapably approval, praise, recognition, rewarding and reinforcement or the lack of them seems to valorise or otherwise what educators produce in their daily struggle. Adding up to this the particularity and the difficulty of the role of the educators, since values, socialisation and ethical issues are involved in their daily labour, we can probably start comprehending why it was such a highly debated issue at the said seminar.

Notwithstanding this, we shouldn't ignore that pedagogy is not merely about schooling although this is one of its most important dimensions. Now, returning to my initial point about youth abstention from politics. The lack of pedagogy should not be restricted merely to the educators of the formal educational institutions but it ought to be conceived in its broader sense. After all, it is not an issue merely for the educators to resolve but a much wider social one. This is where I'll throw the ball to you.

Alpesh: Yes, I agree with much of what you have said, but not all. Let me begin by dealing with your first issue and expanding some points. Firstly, we must look at social, cultural and political trends beyond our borders ("our" literally meaning the mass of people existing on the British Isles). Germany is a case study. A hugely exciting place, where the people, especially some youth groups, appear to have awoken from their political hibernation and can be seen coming out to vote in the recent polls for the Left-wing candidates. The same has happened in Mexico. From looking outwards, we must then look inwards, and ask some tempestuous question about aims, ethics values, objectives, and hope.

Paulo Freire's influence does not permeate mainstream political thought, but should do. Drawing from Marx, his work on (critical) consciousness is absolutely fundamental for people to understand the *status quo* and their position in a global capitalist means of production driven by neoliberalism. Similarly, Peter McLaren's fabulous work is widely known to those mainly within academia only. Just imagine if this pedagogy emphasising a critical, rather than deskilling and technicist, approach was adopted by all educators, including those on the political right.

Let me go on. You began your argument by suggesting that the "old" Marxian concept of alienation is perhaps outdated, or we may have gone beyond this "blanket-term". Actually, I am inclined to say that we haven't moved beyond alienation; we haven't arrived at it! Let me return to something I mentioned earlier: the notion that the ruling elite do not want to compromise their status and power

structures by replacing the bourgeoisie democracy with a social democratic one – i.e. a political system where the highest minister in the land doesn't get elected with just 33% of the votes, essentially meaning that 77% of the electorate decided they didn't want him in power. Funny notion of democratic representation, eh! This is why I think the notion of alienation is more than relevant. I don't know how better to answer your question than exemplifying the occurrence of alienation in democracy.

Let me briefly deal with the issue about "entrusted" teachers. Do we trust teachers? I don't think we do. I have argued elsewhere (see Maisuria, 2005) that the gradual standardisation and centralisation of the formal education system, especially in the National Curriculum, is stifling creativity from students and teachers, causing great anxiety amongst pupils and teacher to tick boxes and hit arbitrary targets, and amongst a whole host of other things, essentially education is no longer a place of enrichment where the child is enabled to explore and achieve, it is a now a place of training for the knowledge economy. It is the repressive tool of the capitalists that Luis Althusser describes as the "Ideological State Apparatus". It makes me sick to see teachers rote learning for the purposes of SAT's, GCSE's, selection tests at secondary schools. I would not be surprised to see the covert (vocationalised) curriculum for HE be formalised (more) for similar reasons (standards, league tables etc). The best teachers are those who come through courses in higher education that encourage students to critically think about what they are teaching.

Spyros: I'll start from your point regarding alienation: I think you illustrate in the most lucid manner how alienation occurs in the context of contemporary parliamentarism in the UK by picking up on youth abstention from the recent national elections. Quite eloquently you articulate the mechanism through which alienation occurs and this was the crux of my main scepticism in respect to the usage of the term: its centrality and relevance shouldn't be lost nor its meaning and analytical prominence denigrated or abducted as other concepts, such as accountability or respect, that have been hijacked in the parlance and practice of New Labourite politicians and policy makers. Provided we show the way alienation occurs, we cannot effectively speak about it: otherwise it becomes a buzzword of the many employed by pundits and TV commentators nowadays. And yet all this can be linked to democracy and pedagogy, or rather we can think of it as another dimension of the symbiotic relationship between democracy and pedagogy and their broken ties, as they are embodied, experienced and lived in our every day lives. Fischman and McLaren (2005) define democratic pedagogies as:

> ...those that motivate teachers and students, schools and communities
> to deliberate and shape the choices that they make with the
> overarching purpose of contributing to increased social justice,
> equality, and improvement in the quality of life for all constituencies
> within the larger society.

I believe that we cannot have democratic pedagogy where
democracy is missing!

At the same we should not restrict democratic pedagogy to the
domain of schooling or education. It should encompass all social
relations and all fields and spheres of human action and thought.
School selection and standardisation of knowledge, the 'ala carte'
mentality (in respect to knowledge) that we witness in the UK, apart
from treating us (learners and educators) as clients in a
'supermarketised' arena, renders the field of education as a bull-
ring where the fittest survives and progresses while the weaker
stays behind. This neo-Darwinian/neo-evolutionist way of thinking
(and designing policies) resonates, theoretically, in the Parsonian
thinking and his 'functional structuralism': everything has to have a
practical usage and only when we envision such a usage is it
worthwhile to mobilise our resources for its achievement. If you
transfer this into education and educational policymaking, it
becomes rather obvious that notions such as 'meritocracy', 'equal
access', and so on, have become void of meaning or at least with no
universal acceptance. The sociologist John Goldthorpe has
consistently shown through extensive empirical research how and
why meritocracy through education does not actually exist in the
UK. For him, the belief in a meritocratic educational system is a
fallacy (what he coins as the 'meritocratic fallacy'), since not all
students have the same opportunities to progress in education and
from there to get a fair share in the labour market.

But now let me return to Fischman and McLaren (2005). For them:

> ...democratic pedagogies are embedded in a web of social relations,
> where the rights and duties of the learners and educators are
> evaluated not only for the transmission of knowledge (these days
> most often reduced to the results of standardized tests) but also for
> the possible consequences of the participants' actions (those of
> teachers, administrators, students, and communities) in the ongoing
> democratisation of the larger society.

Well, I don't know if you have seen this text, but if you put it next
to the one written by you above, quite a lot of similarities emerge:
this does not strike me as a surprise: the language of democratic
pedagogy is the same regardless of where it is written and for which
context. Although it is able to demarcate society from its institutions
and the agents from the structures surrounding them, it does not

adopt a separationist/partitionist logic about them: while it can see their interaction and their interface it does not aim to cut off one from another in order to control the individuals and institutions such as education. This is a process so much favoured in advanced capitalism; that by living your life as a critical being sets you apart from its very logic!

Alpesh: '[W]e cannot have democratic pedagogies where democracy is missing!' is a superb phrase that should be etched in ink on the forehead of all Ministers involved with education!

I do concur with Fischman and McLaren, and I do think we have a real problem in education which is two fold: preparation of teachers, and classroom pedagogy. Although the two are intertwined in a complex matrix of interconnections, let me deal with them one at a time.

Teacher training (once it was teacher *education*) routes are actually de-skilling teachers, who are becoming (perhaps unconsciously) servants of policy initiatives – a top down approach. Training teachers on some courses are being denied a rigorous holistic education (remember it is now training) underpinned with sociology, politics and social science. Teachers are now being drilled on how to deal with disruptive children (this means children who require effort!), by initiatives and strategies rather than human understanding, empathy and time. I do not lay the blame on teachers themselves, they are the messengers after all, and to be cavalier and maverick requires risking pay rises, promotions and good relations with management, it's all about conformity. As alluded to earlier, it is no coincidence that the most effective teachers come from academic backgrounds that critique policies initiatives of equal opportunities. These are the teachers who make a difference.

Secondly, critical and revolutionary pedagogy as advocated by Peter McLaren is fantastic, and we need teachers to buy into these concepts, and through teacher education, not training, is how we can do it. We can't sit back and allow the dehumanising and corrupting influence of capitalism to seep into education further than its current rot. Theories of reformism, as espoused by proponents such as Eduard Bernstien, are not urgent enough; we need action underpinned by Revolutionary Marxism – and the time is ripe now.

What I want, what we need, is a genuine social democracy – a socially, economically and politically just society. This is impossible whilst the Prime Minister is a virile young courtier of neo-liberalism

and neo-Conservatism. The 2005 education White Paper was no reprise: education is being privatised. And make no mistake, New-Labour have set the foundations to privatise education through the backdoor, this is no less than subterfuge at the highest level. Glenn Rikowski (2005), an international authority on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), explains on a BBC 4 radio programme how the White paper is opening the provision of education to the globalised trading:

> Now, if you have a situation where state schools and private schools are intermingling, however you want to put it, and working with each other, that opens the whole of the state system more fully to the General Agreement on Trade in Services, which is about transforming educational services into internationally tradable commodities. The key point is that there are some local education authorities being run by companies, and some individual schools being run by companies on contract, and profits are made by providing the service at less than contract price, which impinges on staff pay, conditions, the type of labour that is used.

Spyros: Unfortunately, we live in such a conjuncture in history that the issues that you raise above, as well as Rikowski's remarks, are more apropos than ever. Few other moments have signalled such a deep turn in education that also encompasses all its dimensions: from curriculum to admissions, from school segregation to the buy-out of schools, from the crisis in teacher education to the bankruptcy of values in education.

A few weeks ago I was reading Peter McLaren's paper about the invasion of big corporations in the domain of education, what he terms the 'MacDonaldisation' of education. Although it seemed a purely American phenomenon, the internatinalisation and globalisation of capital traversed the Atlantic and reached our doorstep more rapidly than we had imagined. Of course, this didn't happen in a few weeks' time: it was already in the pipeline and after the elite democracy that is imposed onto us sanctioned a 'majority' government that was voted by a small minority of the electorate, the commands of the capital owners and its appropriators have started being executed.

Having set the political environment that surrounds education, the question of 'who educates the educators' bounces back and is seeking for an answer. The easy way to go about it is to say that educators are educated by those who provide them with the specialised knowledge they posses: i.e. Universities, teachers' colleges, educational establishments etc. However, this leaves aside the issue of ideology: are all these institutions free to shape their curriculum without external influences (i.e. from the market); are they exempted from competition, administrative and teaching costs;

are they free to exit the system of inspection, assessment (which is accompanied with rewards or otherwise) and so on? Obviously not. Therefore they operate within a given framework and set of values that is consigned upon by each Government. The Government ensures that all teacher-'training' institutions receive some of their income according to their performance and results and that all such institutions comply with and act in accordance with the legislation pertaining their function and operation and so on.

Despite their relative (and limited) autonomy, teacher-'training' institutions are entrenched into the ideology of the Government. This is the ideology of the ruling class as Althusser has shown us. Althusser (1970) maintained that all the institutions that operate within the State, such as education, are steeped into this ruling ideology, while he argued that the role of the capitalist educational system is to reproduce the diversified division of labour. That is, to transmit 'know-how' and 'rules' of good behaviour since the reproduction of the labour force requires a dual reproduction: of its skills and that of the submission to the ruling class, i.e. to the bourgeoisie.

Nowadays, the ruling ideology is no other than that of the capital and the free market. Insofar as the Government is distinct from the State it appropriates its institutions in order to secure its own unity and reproduction. Educational ideology therefore functions as the unitary of the political forces in power, which do not have a human face but they can be recognised in the form of the various political parties.

Having said this, a contradiction emerges: how is it that a neo-liberal government such as New Labour uses the state in order to maintain its power? Why does it need the state institutions such as education in order to disseminate its ideology? The contradiction is lurking because neo-liberalism is about less state (in opposition to neo-conservatism which is about more state), yet the state and its institutions are focal in this function.

Alpesh: You make some excellent points that I want to pick up, Spyros. The 'Macdonaldisation' of public services does sometimes seem like a notion far removed from British society – make no mistake it is here. Capitalisation is manifesting itself in every service that was traditionally state owned. Through the exercise of deregulation, liberalisation, and privatisation - capital has found its way into state education, the National Health Service, and the British transport infrastructure. In fact, Professor Dave Hill has done some excellent work on this very issue for the International Labour Organisation (ILO) recently. Through a Marxist analysis it is clear to

see how capitalisation, assisted by the government and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), is now firmly entrenched in the fabric of public services. "So what's wrong with this?" is a common response. Well, the consequences are crippling is the short answer. People just do not see, and are not shown, how capitalisation spells the increase in exploitation (of the 'raced' and gendered working class), erosion of working conditions, decrease of pay but more hours and less benefits. Here is just one example: Sweden has a relatively social democratic government with restricted capitalisation of the state sector. Sweden's levels of inequality has barely increased (from a relatively low baseline) in the last 30 years, and also remarkably, the UK has levels of inequality commensurate with that of Sweden 30 years ago.

A second point I want to comment on is your point about the seemingly dichotomous relationship between neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism. I don't believe that such a distinction exists in practice. You are right, neo-liberalism, in theory, is about less state intervention. However, if the state is accommodating (through the WTO, GATS, and a neo-liberal agenda) to a free-market, then it makes no difference to neo-liberals whether the government espouses neo-conservative views as long as it creates the climate for freer trade through deregulation, liberalisation, and privatisation. New Labour is a case and example of this. David Cameron, the leader of the Conservative Party, can only applaud New Labours policies, such as those contained in the education White Paper of October 2005. The Private Finance Initiative dovetails neatly with Conservative ideals incepted by Norman Lamont's Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) policies. The upshot is that New Labour's ideological anchorage is more conservative than the Conservatives! In sum then, if a government, no matter how neo-conservative, poses no threat to the neo-liberal juggernaut, they can not only live with it, but also harness their neo-liberalism.

There is really a problem now with the fact that all the mainstream political parties are right of the centre (notice how talk of the Giddens inspired Third Way approach has disappeared?). This means that people have no real alternatives, and are forced to extremist factions such as the BNP, often on single issues such as immigration. As David Cameron enthuses, "vote Blue get Green". The lines are becoming blurred between traditional demarcated policies camps.

I want to move on, Spyros. How do you think notions of 'democracy', political representation/participation and young people's share in all that are impacted?

Spyros: Although we live at a time when society is increasingly driven by consumption, market values, the irrational 'logic' of capital, and we are daily witnessing the totalising effects of global capitalism, this has not yet become the target of collective struggle. The paradox is that despite the fact that the vast majority of people live and experience the huge range of injustices and inequalities global capitalism has brought and is still bringing about, we still fall short from acquiring the collective consciousness to fight against it. Although social movements exist – from Seattle to Genoa and from Brazil to France, we have many such testimonies – the proletariat has not been united towards a common goal: the replacement of capitalism with a socialist order. Notwithstanding that we realise we are all on the same boat sailing to disaster we have not managed yet to overtake the wheel from the few who posses it, namely the neo-liberals and the capitalists. Modern 'democratic' institutions, such as the political parties, do nothing else but consolidate bourgeoisie democracy. The radical elements within the parties and outside them are being kept away from real action and dynamic groups such as young, critical people are given no space to act. However, this is where a future can begin. The proletariat can be mobilised so that we develop collective consciousness which is steeped in revolutionary and critical pedagogy, and eventually we can capsize the boat of global capitalism. This has to be the first moment of a new socialist order for all.

Alpesh: I agree, Spyros. We have a choice as offered by Rosa Luxemburg: the choice between a capitalist endorsed barbarism on the one hand, or, on the other, socialism. I know which one we have chosen.

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Critical Pedagogy Reloaded

An E-Interview with Peter McLaren

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This e-interview took place in July and August 2005, with minor editing and amendments in September 2006

Glenn: It's great to have this opportunity to interview you for *Information for Social Change*. I would like to start off with the change of emphasis in your most recent books, principally *Capitalists and Conquerors* (2005) and *Teaching against Global Capitalism and the New Imperialism* (with Ramin Farahmandpur, 2005), where you have moved towards framing a critical pedagogy specifically *against empire*. Thus, compared to your earlier *Che Guevara, Paulo Freire and the Pedagogy of Revolution* (2000) it appears to be a kind of 'critical pedagogy reloaded' with the sights set on the empire of capital in general and American imperialism in particular. In some respects, post 9/11 I guess this is not a surprising shift. I am intrigued regarding how you see it, Peter.

Peter: It's good to have this chance to dialogue with you again, Glenn. I agree that the shift toward a discussion of imperialism is not so surprising for those that have been following the trajectory of my work, from a preoccupation with Deweyan critical pragmatism, the Frankfurt School, post-structuralism and then on to a Marxist humanism. My recent book, *Red Seminars*, chronicles my collaborative work over the past 15 years. You can detect the moments where it arches toward a Marxist humanism yet still see where it is lodged in postmodern theory. Yes, I have joined the ranks of the Marxist educationalists (who number but a handful in the US)! That shift has marginalized my work even more (notably within North America, but not within Europe or Latin America). That's partly because there's little discussion of empire and imperialism in the education journals. Whilst there has been a ramp-up of *generalized* critique of the Bush administration, it hasn't led to many substantial treatments of US militarism and empire by educationalists.

Glenn: Which is where your most recent work enters in?

Peter: Yes Glenn, in my recent work I characterize the era directly preceding our neo-liberal dispensation as a time when the US was a creditor nation. Now it's a debtor nation. The globalization of capital marks the internationalization of capitalist relations of exploitation, entailing the subjection of national capital by international capital. Its main concomitant is the astounding flexibility of capital and markets, making it seem unassailable. The overall objective of American strategy in this 'Age of Globalization' is deregulation combined with absolute minimal levels of expenditure for governments. Nevertheless, capital still needs the protection of nation-states; it can be challenged by groups in transnational struggles. Of course, there is a plethora of views regarding relationships between imperialism by territorial conquest and by market power, and how nation-states fit into this picture. I don't have space to go into these here. In my recent work, I don't attempt to resolve the differences among these perspectives on imperialism. I offer them as theoretical weapons for educators to wield in their struggles to understand contemporary geopolitics in the context of capitalist crisis.

Glenn: You have written a lot about the significance of class in recent years. What can critical pedagogy do to problematise class relations in research and writing, but also in work with students?

Peter: Well, one contribution that my work in critical pedagogy has tried to achieve has been to introduce your work, Glenn, to a wider North American audience, and of course that of Paula Allman, Dave Hill, and Mike Cole, and other British Marxist educationalists. Don't forget, the criticisms of my work by you and your *camaradas* in the 1980s and early 1990s were greatly responsible for overturning my orientation to postmodern theory and for my revisiting Marxist theory, leading to my eventual embrace of Marxist humanism (through the additional work of Peter Hudis and the *News & Letters* collective whose work revolves around the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya). It was your 'Scorched Earth' writings, primarily in the mid-nineties (Rikowski, 1996 and 1997), that helped to resurrect Marxist educational theory; a theory that had languished in a state of inertia since the early 1980s. One contribution that your work, and those of your *companera/os* cited above, achieved, was to reveal the perils of the dominant Weberian conception of class; a perspective that woefully reduces class to a 'mode of social differentiation' or a feature of lifestyle or identity where 'superstructural' differences are reified, and with reduced social tensions or contradictions that exist largely at the level of culture and subjectivity. Critical educators who operate within a Weberian class perspective are often driven by a politics that is gradualist and evolutionary and limited to reforming the polity through careful increments (more democratic decision-making, etc.) without

fundamentally altering the market and commodity-exchange. Your work on education and the value theory of labour (particularly the discussions on aspects of labour-power) constitutes a major breakthrough for the development of a distinctly Marxist educational theory. What I like about your current work on this is your emphasis on capital as a mode of being, as a unified social force that flows through our subjectivities, our bodies, our meaning-making capacities. Schools serve as a certain 'habitus' that nourishes labour-power. They are a medium for its constitution and its social production. But schools do more than nourish labour-power. Schools additionally *condition* labour-power in the interests of the marketplace through an emphasis on application for specific capitals. That is, through generating practical education and training that is related to both aspects of labour-power and attributes of labour-power. You break this down even further, Glenn, to sectors of capital, national capital, fractions of capital, individual capital, and functions of capital (Rikowski, 2001). Schools trade in educating for these various capitals. But because labour-power is a living commodity, and a highly contradictory one at that, it can be re-educated and shaped in the interests of *building socialism*. Labour-power, as the capacity or potential to labour, doesn't have to serve its current master: capital. It only does this when it engages in *the act of labouring for a wage*. Because individuals can refuse to labour in the interests of capital accumulation, labour-power can therefore serve another cause: the cause of socialism. Critical pedagogy tries to find ways of wedging itself between the contradictory aspects of labour-power creation and, among students, creating different spaces where a de-reification, de-commodification, and decolonization of subjectivity can occur. And, at the same time, where the development of a Leftist political subjectivity can occur (recognizing that there will always be socially-and-self-imposed constraints). Revolutionary critical pedagogy (a term coined by Paula Allman) is multifaceted in that it brings a Marxist humanist perspective to a wide range of educational issues. The list of topics includes the globalization of capitalism, the marketisation of education, neo-liberalism and school reform, imperialism and capitalist schooling, and so on. For me, revolutionary critical pedagogy also offers an alternative interpretation of the history of capitalism and capitalist societies, with a particular emphasis on the United States.

Glenn: How does this operate, Peter?

Peter: It works within a socialist imaginary. A revolutionary critical pedagogy operates from an understanding that the basis of education is political and that spaces need to be created where students can imagine a different world outside of the capitalist law of value, where alternatives to capitalism and capitalist institutions

can be discussed and debated, and where dialogue can occur about why so many revolutions in past history turned into their opposite. It looks to create a world where social labour is no longer an indirect part of the total social labour but a *direct* part it, where a new mode of distribution can prevail not based on socially necessary labour time but on actual labour time, where alienated human relations are subsumed by transparent ones, where freely associated individuals can work towards a permanent revolution, where the division between mental and manual labour can be abolished, where patriarchal relations and other privileging hierarchies of oppression and exploitation can be ended, where we can truly exercise the principle 'from each according to his or her ability and to each according to his or her need', where we can traverse the terrain of universal rights unburdened by necessity, moving sensuously and fluidly within that ontological space where subjectivity is exercised as a form of capacity-building and creative self-activity within the social totality. This is social space where labour is no longer exploited and becomes a striving that will benefit all human beings, where labour refuses to be instrumentalized and commodified and ceases to be a compulsory activity, and where the full development of human capacity is encouraged. It also builds upon forms of self-organization that are part of the history of liberation struggles worldwide, such as those that developed during the civil rights, feminist and worker movements and those organizations of today that emphasize participatory democracy. Generally classrooms try to mirror in organization what students and teachers would collectively like to see in the world outside of schools: respect for everyone's ideas, tolerance of differences, a commitment to creativity and social and educational justice, the importance of working collectively, a willingness and desire to work hard for the betterment of humanity, a commitment to anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-homophobic practices, etc. Drawing upon a Hegelian-Marxist critique of political economy that underscores the fundamental importance of developing a *philosophy of praxis*, revolutionary critical pedagogy seeks forms of organization that best enable the pursuit of *doing critical philosophy as a way of life*.

Glenn: 'Race' has been another topic that you have written extensively on for many years. What are the special challenges that those on the Left face when teaching 'race' in the US today?

Peter: My frequent co-author, Valerie Scatamburlo-D'Annibale and I just penned the following lines as an opening to an article we are writing: "One of the most taken-for-granted features of contemporary social theory is the ritualistic and increasingly generic critique of Marxism in terms of its alleged failure to address forms of oppression other than that of 'class'." Marxism is considered to be theoretically bankrupt and intellectually *passé* and class analysis is

often savagely lampooned as a rusty weapon wielded clumsily by those mind-locked in the jejune factories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. When Marxist class analysis has not been distorted or equated with some crude version of 'economic determinism,' it has been attacked for diverting attention away from the categories of 'difference' – including 'race'. Marxist analysis is often seen as hostile to race, as positing the reality of class as more important. This may be true for some versions of Marxism. But very often the hostility to Marxism from those whose priority is anti-racism or anti-sexism is a lack of understanding of the race/class/gender problematic that Marxists utilize in their understanding of the social totality of capitalism. Regrettably, to overcome the presumed inadequacies of Marxism, an entire discursive apparatus sometimes called Post-Marxism has arisen to fill the void.

Glenn: So how would you see things, Peter?

Peter: When we claim that class antagonism or struggle is one in a series of social antagonisms – 'race', class, gender, etc. – we often forget the fact that *class sustains the conditions that produce and reproduce the other antagonisms*, which is not to say that we can simply reduce racism or sexism to class. In other words, class struggle is the specific antagonism – the generative matrix – that helps to structure and shape the particularities of the other antagonisms. It creates their conditions of possibility. The unwillingness of many educators to understand this relationship (class as a social relation) has caused the educational Left to evacuate reference to historical structures of totality and universality. Class struggle is a determining force that structures 'in advance' the very agonistic terrain in which other political antagonisms take place.

Glenn: And what is the significance of this for you, Peter, in relation to progressive social transformation?

Peter: Well, for me it is important to bring educational reform movements into conversation with movements that speak to the larger totality of capitalist social relations and which challenge – to use a Rikowskian term – the very matter and anti-matter of capital's social universe. We need to keep our strategic focus on capitalist exploitation if we want to have effective anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic struggles. We need to challenge global capitalism universally, which does not mean we ignore other social antagonisms and forms of oppression, the horizon of which capitalism functions to sustain.

Glenn: How would you approach the general relation between learning for democracy and critical pedagogy, Peter?

Peter: Much work on democracy and education is grounded in a Deweyan, Rawlsian or Habermasian conception of social justice. I have tried to apply a Marxist critique to liberal and Left-liberal conceptions of democracy as a way of inviting educators to think of the forces and relations of production. Here I have been influenced by the work of Daniel Bensaid (2002). Bensaid underscores what is essentially the irreconcilability of theories of justice (such as those by Rawls and Habermas) and Marx's critique of political economy. In the Rawlsian conception of the social contract, its conclusions are built into its premises since it never leaves the pristine world of inter-individual juridical relations. For instance, liberal theories of justice attempt to harmonize individual interests in the private sphere such that an injustice only occurs when the production of inequalities begins to affect the weakest members of that society. But Bensaid asks a crucial question: How can a society allocate the collective productivity of social labour individually? He concludes that the concept of cooperation and mutual agreement between individuals is a formalist fiction that excludes the messy world of class exploitation and the social division of labour. For liberals, inequality is permitted to exist as long as such inequalities make a functional contribution to the expectations of the least advantaged. Bensaid likens this situation to a conception of economic growth commonly conceptualized as `shares of the cake'. The idea is as follows: so long as the cake gets bigger, the smallest share, *pari passu*, continues to grow, even if the largest grows more quickly and the difference between them dramatically increases. Yet such a conception of justice breaks down in the face of real, existing inequality premised on the reproduction of capitalist social relations of exploitation. This theory of social justice does have some sense to it, but only if we believe that we live in a harmonious world of decision-makers minus class conflict. But we don't inhabit a world primarily driven by inter-subjectivity and communicative rationality. There is an *a priori* acceptance of the despotism of the market in liberal theories of justice. Liberals view as pointless the idea of redistributing the wealth of the rich. They prefer helping them perform their wealth-creating role better, because this increases the size of the common cake. In fact, it echoes the famous words of George W. Bush: 'Make the pie higher'! Yet critiquing this point does not justify inertia: Freire, for example, was very critical of 'militant Marxists' who argued that little could be done to democratize education until class society was abolished. While I am frustrated sometimes with what appears to be an insufficient critique of political economy in his later work, I am a steadfast admirer of Freire. He is undoubtedly one of the most important influences in my work.

Glenn: Your recent writings indicate that 'all is not well' with American democracy (and indeed democracy in all of the most developed capitalist economies): how do you see the role of 'critical educator' in the struggle for democracy, Peter?

Peter: When Bush says that 'the past is over', that 'this is still a dangerous world' filled with 'madmen and uncertainty and potential mental losses' he is speaking in apocalyptic terms that resonate with evangelical Christians who are not known for their appreciation of nuance. When he describes himself as 'misunderestimated' we know that he is intent on following through on his plans. When he affirms that 'families is where our nation finds hope, where our wings take dream' and when he exclaims that we must 'Vulcanize society' or 'make the pie higher', or when he assumes the role of the 'education president' and asks, 'is our children learning' we know that these malapropisms help to endear him to potential voters in America's heartland. He has often been described as somebody most Americans would love to have a beer with in a local bar. So when his administration chooses to rule by the Big Lie, by carefully selecting bits of information to be disseminated by the media, these lies carry considerable credibility; they are credible lies. This has always been the case with respect to the manufacturing of consent by means of the ideological state apparatuses in the US. Teachers become an easily breached conduit for the official narratives of the state because they want to help their students develop a coherent worldview and provide them with an enduring stability, especially in these times of crisis. Faith in the unique moral destiny of the United States seems to increase during times of national crisis along with an intolerance of conflicting views; today, those held by secular humanists or Muslims. So we have school boards in various states offering creationism or intelligent design as credible explanations of the origins of human life that they insist should be offered alongside scientific theories of evolution. In *Capitalists and Conquerors*, Nathalia Jaramillo and I write about this civil religion that serves to frame and define the Manichean Universe of good and evil, the moral universe within which George W. Bush loves to operate.

Glenn: This leaves little critical space for secular humanists, then.

Peter: Yes, it's amazing, Glenn, how secular humanists have become the enemy. Any criticism of Bush by the Left is seen as the work of a Satanic force, or at the very least the work of weak-minded liberals who not only are responsible for the decline in America's moral values, but who also are unwilling and incapable of protecting the United States from terrorists who 'hate our freedoms' and Christian values. Now couple this with the fact that educational Leftists here in the US are largely reluctant to consider

Marxist analyses of political economy in their research and the result is that you get little discussion of how to transform the capital relation itself in the educational literature. That is simply off limits.

Glenn: Then in what ways do US Left educationalists relate to arguments about social change?

Peter: The most that such Left liberal reformists can do is talk about how to reconstitute and revitalize the social contract, how to deepen democratic decision-making and make it more participatory, and to struggle to make civil society more responsible in a bottom-up manner to the needs of the people. In short, you have the Post-Marxist emphasis on radical democracy. Because Left liberals, or radical democrats, fail to recognize class as a matrix that generates the totality of social and political relations, then the liberal-democratic horizon that provides the scope for their pedagogies permits no room to imagine a world outside of the capitalist law of value, outside of capital as a social relation and social force that invades the whole of our existence. Reformers of this ilk seek, at best, a reassertion of productive capital over financial capital in the global economy or call for a global redistributive project, but rarely do they call for transcending the very value form of labour that gives life and lie to the social universe of capital.

Glenn: Right Peter: what kind of educators *do* we need then?

Peter: We need critical educators to help us confront the hydra-headed depredations of capitalism and to analyze how the social power of the popular classes is to be reconstructed. We need to extend to the state those very counter-hegemonic spaces of resistance that are occurring with social movements at the level of civil society. Further, social movements need to transnationalize those struggles. Here is where the progressives in the United States are at a stalemate. I believe, along with Marxist humanists, that we need to become *philosophers of praxis*; that we need to build organizations that both reflect and serve as a medium for the construction of socialism.

Glenn: You've spoken in Latin America regularly since the late 1980s, you've recently done work in Venezuela, met President Chavez, and have conducted seminars on critical pedagogy frequently in Mexico. Twenty years later, education scholars and activists have approached you in various Latin American countries and asked if they could set up foundations and institutes in your name centring on advancing critical pedagogy throughout Latin America. How do you see this development? Is it a final vindication of your work?

Peter: You are referring to the recent creation of La Fundacion McLaren de Pedagogia Critica in Tijuana Mexico, and the forthcoming Instituto Peter McLaren in Cordoba, Argentina. Yes, these were initiated by scholars and activists whom, I suspect, are drawn to the Marxist humanism that undergirds my work in critical pedagogy. I would like to emphasize that these foundations and institutes are not about engaging my work in isolation from the work of other critical educators, but about developing cross-border collaborative work in the general field of critical pedagogy. If my work can serve as a flashpoint in this regard, and in developing a broader anti-imperialist pedagogical movement that is directed at creating socialism, then I look forward to a future of struggle on the streets as much as in the classrooms.

Glenn: Thank you, Peter.

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Marxism and Educational Theory: An E-Interview with Mike Cole

Professor Mike Cole (Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln, UK) has written extensively on equality issues, in particular, equality and education. In recent years he has engaged in critiques of postmodernism, poststructuralism, transmodernism, critical race theory, the new US Empire, and globalisation and education policy. Mike edited *Bowles and Gintis Revisited* (Falmer Press, 1988), *The Social Contexts of Schooling* (Falmer Press, 1989), *Education for Equality* (Routledge, 1990), *Professional Issues for Teachers and Student Teachers* (David Fulton, 1999), and *Education, Equality and Human Rights* (Falmer Press, 2000; new edition, Routledge, 2006). With Gareth Dale, he edited *Migrant Labour in the European Union* (Berg, 1999) and with Dave Hill and Sharanjeet Shan, *Promoting Equality in Primary Schools* (Cassell, 1997). With Dave Hill, he edited *Promoting Equality in Secondary Schools* (Cassell, 1999) and *Schooling and Equality: Fact, Concept and Policy* (Kogan Page, 2001). He is also the editor of *Professional Value and Practice: Meeting the Standards* (David Fulton, 2005). Professor Cole's latest book, *Marxism and Educational Theory: Origins and Issues* will be published by Routledge in 2007. In 1989, Mike was a co-founder of the Hillcole Group of Radical Left Educators with Dave Hill.

*Here he is interviewed by **Glenn Rikowski**. The interview took place by email during August and September 2006*

Glenn: It's great to be interviewing you here Mike, and at such an auspicious moment, when your new book is on the horizon. Perhaps you could start off by telling us something about the key issues and ideas in *Marxism and Educational Theory: Origins and Issues* (Cole, forthcoming, 2007).

Mike: Well, the book started off as a critique of postmodernism in educational theory, but has grown much bigger. It now encompasses poststructuralism, transmodernism, and critical race theory, in addition to postmodernism. The book begins with some personal reflections on my life, which I relate to political events from my birth in 1946 up to the present. In Part 1 of the book, there are chapters looking at utopian and scientific socialism, and Nietzsche and the origins of poststructuralism and postmodernism. Part 2 addresses poststructuralism and postmodernism in educational theory, and their claims for promoting social change and social justice. I then look at transmodernism in educational theory. After that I sketch the all-pervasive concept of globalisation, and then after that, I address the issue of environmental

destruction, looking at the *Destruction of Resources, Unhealthy Food, Genetic Modification* and at *Climate Change*, all in the context of global neo-liberal capitalism.

The next chapter is about the 'New Imperialism' from postmodern, transmodern and Marxist approaches respectively. In the final chapter of the book, I begin with some brief comments on education in contemporary capitalist societies, focusing on the commodification of knowledge, and the business agendas *for* and *in* education. Next I make some detailed suggestions on the possibilities within education of creating an arena where real global and local issues may be addressed. In the Conclusion, I address some of the common objections to Marxism, and attempt to respond to them.

Glenn: Thanks Mike, very detailed. I guess most readers would be thereabouts with postmodernism and maybe poststructuralism, Mike. But what is this transmodernism?

Mike: As I understand those that call themselves transmodernists, its defining features are: Rejection of totalising synthesis; Critique of Modernity; Anti-Eurocentrism; Critique of Postmodernism; Analogic Reasoning: reasoning from 'OUTSIDE' the system of global domination; Reverence for (indigenous and ancient) traditions of religion, culture, philosophy and morality; Analectic Interaction which is not so much a way of thinking as a new way of living in relation to Others; and Critique of (US) Imperialism. I deal with each issue in the book, critiquing them from a Marxist perspective. The founding figure of transmodernism is the prolific writer on Karl Marx, Enrique Dussel, but it's recently been lauded in educational theory by David Geoffrey Smith (Smith, 2003). Smith's article won The Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies award for 'The Most Outstanding Publication in Curriculum Studies in Canada in 2003'. So it needs to be taken seriously. Moreover, transmodernism has recently been adopted by Paul Gilroy (2004), described by *The Independent* as 'one of the most incisive thinkers of his generation'.

Glenn: I know you have travelled widely, to Vietnam, South Africa and the United States amongst other places. How have these travels informed your writing and politics? What events and instances particularly stand out?

Mike: Yes, I've had the fortune to travel to most of the world. During these trips, the multifarious manifestations and experiences of global capitalism (apartheid in the United States, and in 'post-apartheid' South Africa; the barrios in Brazil; the grinding poverty in

India are particularly unforgettable) all solidified my Marxist perspective on life.

Glenn: I know that Cuba is dear to your heart; perhaps you could explain to readers why you think Cuba is so significant in these times.

Mike: I've been to Cuba three times, twice as a tourist, and the last time presenting a paper at a conference. Fidel was there and I was very impressed with his honesty. I made notes on his interventions, getting a glimpse of the less public side of the man. Cuba is not perfect socialism, but it gives us a glimpse of how things could be. Fidel stated: 'I defy you to find one malnourished baby in the whole island', and having travelled extensively in Cuba, I can vouch for that. Outside the tourist areas, people are genuinely socialist in their outlook on life. In societies which encourage selfishness, greed and competitiveness (Thatcherism in Britain of the 1980s is a perfect example), people will tend to act in self-centred ways. However, in societies which discourage these values and promote communal values people will tend to act in ways that consider the collective as well as their own selves. As Marx and Engels put it in *The German Ideology*: 'It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness' (1846, p.42).

Glenn: Yes, and I guess that these communal values are something that are being undermined by New Labour's education policy, especially in the higher education sector, where policy seeks to transforms students into educational consumers, or at least to take on a consumerist mentality, as Neil Gross argued in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* this week (in Marcus, 2006). Yet are there any signs that some students and teachers in higher education are resisting this marketisation, consumerism and commodification in higher education in the UK, Mike? Will we all be forced to dance to the tune of the new higher education market? Is there any hope for the university in the most developed contemporary capitalist societies such as the UK, do you think?

Mike: Well, it's the old question of structure and agency. The structures of capitalist society promoting neo-liberalism, consumerism and the commodification of education at all levels are firmly in place, and have been intensified under New Labour. On the other hand, there will always be resistance. And we gave a good model in current developments in Venezuela. As I argue in the book, under the leadership of Hugo Chávez, the government is committed to 'economic, political, social and cultural transformation towards a "Socialism of the 21st Century"' (Muhr and Verger, 2006, p.1). With respect to HE, where policy is firmly embedded in other

socialist projects, such as land and income redistribution, free health, and state-subsidised food (Ibid., p.12), the government has introduced *Municipalización*, a distinct, two-dimensional form of decentralisation, concerned with the democratisation of HE as it geographically de-concentrates the traditional university infrastructure and takes the university to where the people are, including factories and prisons (Ibid., p. 8). Students are encouraged to 'learn through doing' and to 'support their neighbourhood in resolving real community problems'. In this way the university is at the service of the people, rather than being an 'elite institution divorce from society' (Ibid., p. 9). I'm not saying we can institute this in Britain tomorrow, but it's a good thing to strive for in the longer term. I'm going to Venezuela in October, teaching at the Bolivarian University in Caracas, so perhaps I can update you then?

Glenn: Wow! This makes conceptions of 'lifelong learning' and 'community education' currently on offer here in dear old England sound rather limited, insipid and, well – boring. I like in particular the idea of bringing labour, community and education together, which Marx advocated (see Rikowski, 2004). Another main area of your work, Mike, over many years, has been 'race' in education. Critical Race Theory appears to be gaining ground in terms of academics re-thinking 'race' in education. What's your view of Critical Race Theory? To what extent does it have something to offer regarding anti-racist policies and practices in education, Mike?

Mike: CRT is grounded in the uncompromising insistence that 'race' should occupy the central position in any legal, educational, or social policy analysis (Darder and Torres, 2004, p.98). Given this centrality, 'racial' liberation is embraced as not only the primary but as the most significant objective of any emancipatory vision of education in the larger society. While CRT theorists overwhelmingly are concerned with US issues, and CRT is virtually unknown outside of the USA, aspects of it have recently been adopted *in toto* by arguably the most influential 'race' theorist within education in Britain, David Gillborn, so it's important that Marxists address it. For Marxists, while recognising the crucial significance of identities other than social class, class exploitation and class struggle is constitutive of capitalism, and 'race' and racism need to be understood in terms of the role that racialization plays in the retention and enhancement of capitalism by capitalists. The problem with CRT is that it does not connect with modes of production – a major strength of Marxism is that it does make these connections. This does not mean that CRT cannot provide insights into racism in capitalist societies. For example, its stress that 'people of color' speak from a unique experience framed by racism, and, therefore, need to be listened to,

is important. Such insights are particularly illuminating for white people

Glenn: Of course, Mike, as well as 'race' you have also been involved in exploring other dimensions of inequality and injustice in capitalist society and education and looking at these in relation to the notion of human rights. I was thinking of your recently published Second Edition of *Education, Equality and Human Rights*. Now, in relation to Marx and Marxism, the concept of human rights has a rather chequered history. How might Marxist educators productively use the concept of human rights today, Mike?

Mike: Well, the Introduction deals with human rights legislation, internationally and nationally and looks briefly at the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) that will come into being in October 2007. But the book is not about human rights in the specific sense of the term. It is more about rights associated with gender, 'race', sexuality, disability and social class, hence the subtitle of the book. I think it is important for Marxist educators and Marxists in general, to address these issues. Long gone are the days when socialists could talk freely about the 'rights of the working man' (clearly male, but assumed to be white, straight and able-bodied). While, for Marxists, capitalism is underpinned by the fundamental struggle between the two social classes, other issues are important too. As far as the relationship between Marxism and morality is concerned, there is a debate about this: 'did Marx have a theory of morality or not'. My view, following Callinicos (2000), is that he did. I deal with this in the new book (Cole, forthcoming, 2007).

Glenn: Why do you think education is so important for radical educational and social change? What can educators do to bring about progressive social change today?

Mike: I think education is an important arena of struggle. Like other aspects of life under contemporary global neo-liberal capitalism, education is being commodified marketised and consumerised (you mentioned this earlier). However, education also has great potential for change. In Chapter 10 of the book (Cole, forthcoming, 2007), I deal with both the constraints and the possibilities of education under capitalism. With respect to the latter, I make some detailed suggestions on the possibilities within education of creating an arena where real global and local issues may be addressed; where students may link up with oppressed communities; and where they may critically develop their awareness of pressing issues concerning our current capitalist world. As priorities, I focus on the need for a critical analysis of the

media and on the need for a serious consideration of the differing theoretical perspectives and explanations examined in the book. There are precedents for this. To take just one example, though not based on conventional capitalist schooling, on holiday recently in Bosnia I was chatting to two waiters, both Marxists. They told me that, in the former Yugoslavia, the Labour Theory of Value was a compulsory element of the secondary school curriculum.

Glenn: Amazing! If only the labour theory of value was taught in our schools! Of course people would say it is too dull, boring and difficult. But this example from the former Yugoslavia suggests this might be wishful thinking on their part. Getting on to the final question, Mike, *Information for Social Change* is, of course, principally for radical information and library workers. What are your views on the contribution that libraries can make towards progressive social change?

Mike: Libraries are not my field, but I think their role in global capitalism, actual and potential, is huge. Of course, your partner Ruth (Rikowski, 2005) deals at length with these issues, but I think I can say something generally about the significance of libraries and information work. Information is one of the key resources for progressive struggles: absolutely essential. It is not only vital for countering the official discourse, half-truths – and sometimes downright untruths – of governments and their backers, but also necessary for adding to or critiquing accounts given in mainstream media – on wars, economic developments, education policy and other issues. Librarians and information workers provide activists for progressive social change with advice, guidance, expertise and support in putting this stuff together. If these resources in public libraries were ever tendered out to private companies, or if, say, university libraries were run by private operators I am not convinced that education activists and those critical of how education is run in society today would get the kind of service or resources they need – for a number of reasons: costs, censorship, surveillance (the Patriot Act in the US might just be the beginning as far as libraries are concerned). Libraries and free access to information about how our society operates within neo-liberal global capitalism are a vital resource for those wishing to make a better society. They should be defended, enhanced and cherished.

Glenn: Thanks Mike.

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Poetry Anthology Review by Paul Catherall

Linear Hymns, a collection of lyrics and poems – by
Giles Paley-Phillips

This poetry anthology is 'narrated by a twenty something man still trying to come to terms with the death of his mother to leukaemia when he was 6 years old'. Profits from the book are also donated to a leukaemia charity.

The book contains around forty poems, split into three sections entitled 'The Change', 'The Pause' and 'The Warmth'. The first part seems to dwell on the writer's feelings at the time of his mother's illness and passing - seen in poems such as 'Dr. Zivago' and 'Storms on the Cemetery.' The second part of the book seems to concern the grieving process, whilst the last part dwells on the aftermath and the poet's coming to terms with his loss in later life.

The poems themselves are abstract rather than lyrical, written in a style reminiscent of the expressionist poets Sylvia Plath, Francis Berry and Roy Fisher. However, whilst the expressionist poets often reflect on conceptual issues of mortality, it can be seen that Paley-Phillips' response conveys a range of reflections on bereavement localised around his own personal loss, with each poem devoted exclusively to this experience. It is this thematic consistency which lends the book so much appeal, with each poem drawing on its own individual subject matter, whilst also adding to our wider perspective on the author's experience conveyed through the work.

In the first section of the book, 'The Change', we are presented with scenes from the illness and passing of the author's mother. The poem 'Dr. Zhivago' seems to parody the medical world, the 'saintly, even faintly amused' doctor contrasts with the naïve, child-like faith of the speaker. The innocent expectations of the poet as a child are clearly portrayed. Another poem, 'Terminal Orchid' presents a contrast to the Zhivago poem; the poet's mother has approached a 'soothsayer', although we are unsure if this is simply an

acquaintance or an actual fortune-teller, the soothsayer reassures that 'You'll carry on, just fine'. This is confirmed by the speaker's ironic comment that 'she'll look a million dollars, in that grey hairpiece we found'. The poem ends reflecting on the strength of the poet's mother and despite all these self-deceptions and empty reassurances, the poet has been 'Taught so much by your strength…'

The poem, 'God Bless Sympathy', reflects on the 'continuing game' of the author's mother in being the object of sympathy; the author considers that sympathy is just a social convention, an expression resembling performance played out 'even when it's not in key'. Another poem in this section, 'The jewel encrusted panda sleeps alone' contains personal imagery which obviously has some special meaning for the poet. We can only speculate if the panda is a toy or other special object which featured in the author's relationship with his mother. The author hints that his mother is now in a place of dreams, possibly reflecting on a coma or other state of unconsciousness, 'You sleep now in dreams I've made, I put them there before night appeared'.

Later poems in this section seem to reflect on the passing of the author's mother. 'Storms on the Cemetery' seems to reflect on the relationship between time and our lives, 'Time has had its good fun, a happy place to be.' The final poem in the section 'Your last dance before Christmas' is a melancholy reflection that the poet's mother is not present at Christmas time, it is '8 days till Christmas' and the poet considers '…if you'd been here, what would it have been like?'. The poet wishes he could see his mother 'dance one last time'.

In the second part of the book, 'The Pause' the poet seems to express his sense of mourning. The poem 'Might be Tomorrow' is an emotional expression of loss - 'I miss you as much, as much as I can miss someone.' The poet is 'scared' that he has forgotten details of his mother, 'touched your hair and face, but this I can't remember.' The poet seems to reflect on his young age at the time of his loss, re-enacting his relationship with her through vivid memories 'I'm going to leave my room now and when I do please smile.'

Later poems in this section seem to reflect on a period of being lost or without sense of purpose, this is most evident in 'Wooden pillow vacation' where the poet appears to shed prior emotions, possibly living rough to escape conventional life and the emotions that accompany this existence; the image of the sea, a destructive metaphor heightens this sense of ablution:

> 'I've taken to sleeping around,
> On benches along the seafront.
> Their all-wooden pillows,
> Feel pure and undiscerning.'

However, the last poems in this section convey a greater sense of the poet's reconciliation with his loss; poems such as 'Some flowers rest' reflect on the poet's tender memories of his mother as a child, picturing her as 'an angel' in a winter landscape, 'Snow touches my forehead… I remember my angel.'

In the last section of the book 'The warmth', the poet presents his feelings on his mother's loss as an adult coming to terms with his own life. These later poems suggest a grieving process which has occurred long after the loss itself, since the poet can only now comprehend and organise his thoughts as a mature individual. The poem 'Life started yesterday' suggests this sense of delayed morning; the poem suggests the poet has only recently found a voice to express his feelings:

> 'Lie on a pillow of poems.
> The motion of life is slow.
> I'd forgotten how to talk
> And the sound of my own name.'

Another poem 'All-star cast' reflects sombrely that the author's mother is just a member of his 'family tree', however for him, she is a member of an 'all-star cast'. The poem 'the enchantment' also conveys this sense of reconciliation, suggesting that the poet has reconstructed a precious image of his mother, 'We'll hold you tight like splintered glue, fall in love with every little you.'

In conclusion, the poems express a very personal and emotional perspective on personal loss; all the more vivid due to the fact they are written in direct response to the poet's experience as a young child. We have the impression that the poems represent a form of expression which the poet has only recently discovered as an adult, being unable to process these raw feelings as a child. Whilst some of the poems may appear difficult, they are almost all based around individual metaphors (suggested in the poem's title), this image often represents or expresses some part of the poet's feelings in dealing with his loss, so each poem contributes to the wider perspective we have on the poet and his experience. This is a very touching collection of poems and well worth the effort to explore and enjoy.

The book is sold in aid of the Leukaemia Research charity.

Publication Details:

Linear Hymns, by Giles Paley-Phillips, Eli Tender Publishing, 2004.
Price: £5.

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http://www.gilespaleyphillips.co.uk

Also see: http://www.myspace.com/gilespaleyphillips

Foibles, Frolics and Phantasms: Illustrated Poems (1995-2005)
By Paul Catherall
PublishAmerica, 2006
ISBN 1 4241 1399 7

Reviewed by Ruth Rikowski

This is a wonderful, moving book, which takes us to a world far beyond our every day existence. It contains a variety of poems, all written by Paul Catherall from North Wales, who by day works as an information professional in higher education. The poems have been written over a 10-year period. There are also many illustrations throughout it, also all by the poet, and this includes the captivating cover itself.

The poems cover a variety of themes, and as Catherall says, they:

> *...deal with a range of themes ranging from the simple to the complex and from the transcendental to the macabre...* (p.7)

A unifying theme that runs through them though, I think, is the way in which the poet compares and contrasts urban life with nature and rural life. The poet has been inspired by poets such as Sylvia Plath, Francis Berry and Al Alvarez.

The book contains different types of poems. There are 'Haiku-style poems' for example, which are:

> *...a traditional Japanese verse form often conveying wisdom or an allegorical story within a short length.* (Catherall, p.66)

I did not know that so much could be said in 3 lines! Take this 'Haiku-style' poem, for example:

> **'Gift'**
> Birthday party gift
> Lovingly wrapped in paper –
> Already got one. (p.69)

Then there are 'Englynion-style poems', which are an ancient Welsh verse-form and:

> *...they are typically composed of any number of short three-line stanzas.* (Catherall, p. 59)

Here is an extract from **'Walking in Cader Idris'**, for example:

> "Hard to recall in the silence of mists,
> Urban sounds, whir and frenzy –
> Other-worldly it seemed and ethereal. (p.61)

I was also particularly moved by the poem '**Tendon'** (p.45)**,** which is about Repetitive Strain Injury. Catherall describes how the tendon in his hand first incurred his woes, but now he feels sorry for it. He points out the fact that he must be patient. RSI is a common problem today, and we must be careful not to put unnecessary demands on our bodies, as we try to deal with all this new technology.

Then, there is **'Monoglot'**, which begins:

> "I approach a dull mountain;
> below me,
> figures distant
> on an innate horizon
> wave inscrutable gestures." (p.13)

This poem conveys something to us, perhaps, about feelings of alienation, and being an observer of society, engulfed in silence, rather than actually being part of society in some fundamental way.

Whilst **'Poem for a Poet'** makes the point that: "The poem is our consciousness
come alive" (p.31)

The final section is entitled "**Excerpts from 'The Legends of Ossian'"**. '**The Legends of Ossian'** is a novel in progress by Paul Catherall, which is set in a fictional Dark Age British kingdom, called Beltain. One of the poems, '**The Lay of Vir'** begins:

> "Sons of Bailto harken!
> The long years pass like leaves blown in the autumn wind,
> Dry are the bones of the founding sires of Ilyrion
> Iron citadel of the High Kings of Beltain. (p.81)

Catherall thinks that poetry is sadly in decline. Yet, surely the arts always struggle to survive in capitalism – money cannot easily be made from the arts, and the arts cannot readily be transformed into saleable, tradable commodities. Indeed, it is fascinating to realise the extent to which the genius Mozart himself seemed to feel this.

In a letter that Mozart wrote to an Italian friend on 4th September 1776, he said:

Most beloved and esteemed signor, I beg you to tell me what you think of my most humble music.   We live in a world where the arts should be encouraged so that we may enlighten one another. But in the country where I live music must struggle even to exist.[1]

Hopefully, Catherall's book will inspire others to think further about the value and beauty of poetry, as well as the value of the arts more in general. Also, that it will encourage and inspire others to read and write more poetry themselves. Indeed, my own children are all keen on writing poetry.[2]

Let poetry and the arts continue to thrive in one way or another, and in various shapes and forms, and let beauty and wonder shine through in our lives.

NOTES:

1. The genius of Mozart: a personal exploration by Charles Hazlewood, a 3-part BBC Drama Documentary on the life of Mozart (part 1). First broadcast between 19th March and 2nd April 2004, on BBC 2, Friday, pm. Written and Directed by Andy King-Dabbs. See:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/classicaltv/mozart/theseries/eTV.shtml

2. And there is a selection of their poems on the Rikowski website, 'The Flow of Ideas' – see:
http://www.flowideas.co.uk/?page=articles&sub=Poems%20by%20Alex%20Rikowski
http://www.flowideas.co.uk/?page=articles&sub=Poems%20by%20Gregory%20Rikowski
http://www.flowideas.co.uk/?page=articles&sub=Poems%20by%20Victor%20Rikowski

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Another version of this review is available on amazon.co.uk and amazon.com. See:

http://www.amazon.co.uk/Foibles-Frolics-Phantasms-Illustrated-Catherall/dp/1424113997/sr=1-3/qid=1159377714/ref=sr_1_3/026-6260269-3891667?ie=UTF8&s=books
And:

http://www.amazon.com/Foibles-Frolics-Phantasms-Illustrated-Catherall/dp/1424113997/sr=1-1/qid=1159377577/ref=sr_1_1/002-4186075-9369655?ie=UTF8&s=books

Also, on the Rikowski website, 'The Flow of Ideas' – see
http://www.flowideas.co.uk/?page=articles&sub=Foibles,%20Frolics%20and%20Phantasms

Delivering E-learning for Information Services in Higher Education
By Paul Catherall

Chandos Publishing: Oxford, 2004
ISBN 1 84334 088 7 (pbk); 1 84334 095 X (hdbk)
http://www.chandospublishing.com/catalogue/record_detail.php?rec
ordID=48

Reviewed by Ruth Rikowski

This book provides a wealth of very valuable information in regard to the delivery of e-learning for Information Services in the Higher Education sector.

Catherall begins by considering exactly what e-learning is, and defining our terms is always a very good place to start, in my view. Catherall says that, basically, e-learning is: "...a computer-based form of learning experience" (p.1). Whilst a wider definition encompasses any technology that allows "...for the delivery of learning resources or communication between tutor and students..." (pp.1-2). This broader definition also includes the use of audio, visual and other media. Finally, e-learning can also be considered within a wider educational and pedagogical approach. This wider definition clearly has far-reaching implications.

As Catherall says:

> E-learning and related systems used to support learning and teaching are quickly becoming an important feature of the rapidly changing climate in HE provision (p. 10).

He notes the fact that more people than ever are going to university today, but many students now have to face financial difficulties, as well as feeling compelled to gain more marketable skills. All this has led to a demand for more core study skills and

> ...flexible approaches to support course delivery in a low-contact study context (p.75).

So e-learning has a very valuable role to play in society today, and the importance of e-learning is likely to rise still further in the future, especially as more people undertake part-time study and seek alternative methods of study. Within this, though, the importance of face-to-face teaching should also not be forgotten, in my view.

Catherall argues that one of the most important characteristics of e-learning lies in the fact that many systems endeavour to provide an interface that is both intuitive and usable. Thus, the human-computer interaction side of this technology is very important and is likely to continue to be developed in the future. This extends to usability for those with disabilities.

Catherall's book includes chapters on topics such as Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), Training and User Support, Accessibility and Legal Issues, Other Online Learning Tools and Quality Assurance and Monitoring.

In the opening chapter Catherall makes the point that careful thought needs to be given to the selection and deployment of an e-learning system. Due consideration needs to be given to factors such as the requirements for technical expertise to build a server for running e-learning software; finance, including the cost of staffing, software purchase and licenses and various hardware requirements, in order to provide an e-learning system as a network service.

Virtual Learning Environments are examined in chapters 2 and 3, and as Catherall says:

> The VLE or virtual learning environment is a phrase used to define systems comprising a range of e-learning characteristics and features (p.21).

As he notes, the VLE has two main functions – effective interaction between tutors and students and content distribution. The book also includes research undertaken by Catherall on VLEs across a number of different UK He institutions. Other sections include choosing a VLE, managing the VLE, managing users of the VLE and various VLE courses.

In Chapter 5, Catherall considers **'Accessibility and legal issues'**, focusing in particular on disability and he notes that:

> The rise of electronic systems to facilitate traditional information services has prompted legislation and sector-led recommendations to ensure system accessibility for users with disabilities and other access problems. (p.87).

Catherall highlights the fact that many students today have disabilities and cites a report by the City University, London (2003) which suggests that 4.6% of HE students in the UK had declared a disability and that this is likely to increase in the future. Common disabilities and access problems include blind or partially sighted; motor, mobility or dexterity; cognitive; colour blindness; epilepsy; deafness/hearing impairment; reading and writing difficulties.

Catherall considers some of the wide range of software that exists to facilitate access to web resources for disabled users, such as the fact that Netscape Navigator 7:

> *…provides a 'text zoom' feature to increase text size; fonts and colours may also be set within browser preferences* (p.98).

Meanwhile, the Microsoft Windows XP operating system provides various accessibility tools for those with disabilities, such as screen magnifiers and 'sticky keys' to access Windows features, using key combinations pressed incrementally.

Catherall also highlights the fact that there is a range of legislation today that defines the responsibilities of HE in regard to the provision of accessible services. He considers accessibility and standards issues in general, emphasising that:

> *…in recent years, the World Wide Web Consortium (or W3C) has strengthened co-operation with software developers, accessibility organisations and other stakeholders to develop industry standards for the Web* (p.92).

Catherall points out the fact that W3C is the most influential standards-making body for the World Wide Web, whilst another major standard for web resources are the US Section 508 Rehabilitation Act guidelines. Furthermore, e-learning systems can also be assessed or audited for accessibility and Catherall considers some of the tools that are available here, such as W3C HTML Validator and Bobby, which is a system that checks web resources for WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) compliance.

Chapter 6 covers some other online learning tools. Clearly, as Catherall points out, Microsoft Office is the most widely used software supporting the delivery of effective e-learning. However, as it is a commercial application, this can limit availability, and, as Catherall says, disabled users might not be able to view some file formats. Other tools covered in the book include scanning and OCR, document authoring, web authoring (HTML based) and web authoring tools, including web editing software for use with VLEs (such as Amaya and Microsoft FrontPage) and web-based multimedia.

There is also a section on Learning Objects and VLEs. These learning objects include web-based educational resources, sequential learning presentations and interactive assessments, and can be viewed via a web browser. As Catherall says:

> *The central aim of learning objects is to provide a standard for the creation of reusable content, allowing practitioners to develop course*

materials that are not dependent on any specific VLE system and that may be migrated or reused in other contexts (p.126).

There are also various standards for Learning Objects and a number of organisations that contribute to the development of these standards, and these are also considered in the book.

Chapter 7 considers 'Quality Assurance and Monitoring', and covers areas such as system selection criteria and fitness for purpose and system management and administration to achieve quality service provision. Such quality services usually also have a mission statement and Catherall discusses this, along with various policies and procedures that need to be adopted. Other areas covered in this chapter include system integrity and reliability, standards compliance, system reports and statistics and external auditing.

In Catherall's concluding chapter he considers some trends in HE and IT that might shape e-learning in the future. As he points out, in general:

> *E-learning will play an important role in facilitating low-contact, part-time study necessitated by increasing employee participation in HE …* (p.149).

Thus, e-learning is likely to have an ever-increasingly important part to play in society in the future. 'Worldwide e-learning' is one of the trends which is now gathering pace, with organisations such as the Norwegian University NKI and WUN, the Worldwide Universities Network now delivering HE courses online.

> *The characteristics of this new global educational market are characterised by distance learning, student-led study approaches and use of VLE systems to provide communication, collaboration and content delivery functions* (p.147).

Furthermore, there is the 'e-tutor', whose role encompasses a wide range of activities, such as e-learning management interface to upload course materials, managing user access to online courses and interacting with students via communication features. Other trends Catherall focuses on include 'Mobile learning' (m-learning), Ubiquitous e-learning and various other e-learning devices for the future, such as TV- based Internet, games stations, smart phones and multimedia systems.

Catherall concludes by saying that he hopes that his book:

> *…has provided some insight into the emerging world of e-learning, virtual learning environments and related technology* (p.155).

Well, in my view, it most undoubtedly does! This is a very valuable, useful and informative book for all those that want to find out more about delivering e-learning for information services in higher education. It is also a very useful reference tool, which the reader can return to as and when the need arises.

The book includes a useful glossary of terms, a bibliography and an index.

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Another version is available on amazon.co.uk and amazon.com – see:

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The Copy/South Dossier: Issues in the economics, politics, and ideology of copyright in the global South

The Copy/South Research Group, April 2006

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A Review Article by Ruth Rikowski

This is an important, albeit a very unusual document, with its basic message being that copyright on the whole is undesirable, that it only really benefits the rich, whilst those in the South greatly suffer from the vast array of copyright legislation and agreements that is in existence today. This powerful message is conveyed right from the outset. Following on from the contents page, for example, there is a picture of a librarian holding up a placard saying:

> "**DELINQUENT**: LIBRARIAN – I am a criminal because I photocopied ten books we needed for the school library"

The dossier is a very detailed and informative report, and is divided up into five main sections, which are called 'research propositions'. Thus, it covers many different subject areas, including the global intellectual property system and how it is privatising the commons; the privatisation of the public domain and how it is imposing western/Northern assumptions on cultural production; the impact of the copyright system, as a western construction, on the public domain; how copyright economically benefits the North but not the South; barriers to the use of copyrighted materials in countries of the South and resistance from the South to the global copyright system.

The main aim of the dossier is stated clearly at the beginning, where it says that it:

> ...is addressed to readers who want to learn more about the global role of copyright and, in particular, its largely negative role in the global South (p.3).

The document has been written by the Copy/South Research Group, who researched and debated the issues over a 12-month period, and various workshops were held at Kent University, which enabled this debate to take place. It is not a policy document as such, although it does discuss policy questions. Neither does it express just one point of view. Instead, the intention is to open up the debate. However, it does all this within a clear framework and a definite position which all those involved in the project hold to in broad terms. Thus,

> Ultimately, this dossier seeks to provide an avenue into the serious discussions that must be held regarding copyright and development at the global level. We consistently look at copyright as a western idea being imposed on the global South (p. 10).

The dossier is concerned that not enough consideration has been given to copyright issues in the South, and it seeks to redress this balance. It challenges the notion that copyright can be beneficial to those in the developing world, but that instead:

> ... a 'one-size fits all' approach is detrimental to many. It is important to recognize that many countries in the global South face poverty so severe that copyright protection is (or should be) far from an important item on their political agendas. Rather, literacy and education, poverty reduction, access to clean water and affordable food, and a variety of other needs are all more important than protecting the TRIPS-established property rights of foreign companies (p. 10).

The following organisations all gave financial support to the project: The Open Society Institute, Budapest, Hungary; HIVOS, The Hague, The Netherlands and The Research Fund of Kent Law School, Canterbury, Kent, UK.

The dossier asks some very important questions (some of which are inserted in a very bold way, on full pages in blue), including: 'Are we really living in an information society when most information has been privatized?' and 'Why is copying called stealing even though the original does not disappear?'

I was particularly interested to see that a consideration of the World Trade Organisation's agreement on **Trade-Related Aspects of**

Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) is included in the report. This is an area that I have examined in some detail in my published works, focusing in particular on the implications of TRIPS for libraries and information (see Rikowski 2003 a-c; 2005 a-c; 2006 a-b). I have also given various talks on the subject. I also place TRIPS within an Open Marxist theoretical perspective, arguing that through TRIPS intellectual property rights are being transformed into international tradable commodities.

The dossier says that:

> *...TRIPS and its component parts, such as the Berne Convention, have simply reproduced the types of economic inequalities associated with the earliest stages of colonialism and imperialism* (p. 8).

Furthermore, that TRIPS:

> *...is a fascinating story of how intellectual property-oriented industries of the Northern part of the world sought – and have largely obtained – worldwide IP dominance* (p.34).

The dossier makes the point that, through TRIPS, intellectual property rights have been "... transformed from an obscure national concern of a handful of governments into a global trade-related issue." (p.36) Furthermore, that whilst it has meant more free trade for the global North, it has brought continued poverty for the global South. Thus,

> *There is growing national, international and regional resistance to TRIPS and the impact of copyright on cultural services and cultural life with numerous organizations active throughout the global South resisting the expansion of TRIPS* (p. 154).

Various agreements and acts that are connected to copyright in different ways are covered in the dossier. This includes a consideration of ***Free Trade Agreements (FTAs),*** for example, which are also about further liberalisation of trade and complements many of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreements. FTAs are trade agreements between one or two or more states/countries (bilateral agreements or multilateral agreements) rather than between a large number of different countries, as is the case with the WTO.

Consideration is also given to the ***Digital Millenium Copyright Act (DMCA)***, which is an element of copyright related free trade agreements. The dossier says that the DMCA:

> *... can prevent any copying or access to works, even copying that would be completely excused under copyright law as a 'fair use' or 'fair*

> *dealing'. DMCA is unbalanced as it basically provides considerable power to the copyright content provider at the cost of the consumers' access to information, especially with reference to their 'fair use' rights* (pp.38-9).

Thus, it seems that the DMCA is even more unfair than other copyright legislation in many respects.

I was very interested to read the sections on **commodification** and **consumerism**. Commodification, in particular, is an area that I have examined in some detail in my various published works – and in particular, in a chapter in the forthcoming book that I am editing on Knowledge Management (Rikowski, 2006a). The report considers why songs are composed and books are written, arguing that there are at least two reasons for this. Firstly, that they express the creative urges of individuals and form part of the common heritage. And secondly, that commodities are produced from these creations, for the purpose of exchange. The dossier argues that copyright laws are concerned with the second reason – i.e. with the commodification process. But surely both aspects are needed in order for global capitalism to flourish in general, and for copyright law to operate effectively in capitalism, in particular. However, the report does then say that these two facets do not in fact conflict, pointing out that:

> *…we need to appreciate that when intellectual property-based goods pass through the domestic and increasingly global channels of commercial production and distribution, they are stripped of the persona with which they were individualised when they were made. They are retailed merely as capital goods and usually as the property of some corporate or other commercial entity; they are not under the control of a single individual* (p.55).

Thus, various works are created by individuals, but are then somehow 'stripped' of the personal, creative element; instead the creative works are transformed into commodities and sold in the market-place. In my published works I argue that what is actually going on here is that value that is created from labour (and largely from intellectual labour in this case) is embedded in the commodity. Profits are derived from this value (value that can only ever be created from labour), thereby ensuring the continued success of global capitalism, whilst labour continues to be exploited, alienated and objectified.

In regard to 'Consumerism', the dossier notes that:

> *In the current era, the link between consumerism and copyright is becoming ever firmer; as media theorist Herbert Schiller explains, "cultural production, in its basic forms and relations", is becoming*

"increasingly indistinguishable from production in general" (p.56)
(Schiller, 2000, p.62).

The report also looks at the **differing traditions of cultural creation in the South**, suggesting that some of this can and does lie outside of the commodification process, and it gives some examples in this regard. The Masai warriors of East Africa, for example, are like the Pathans it says, and they do not seek to commodify knowledge and profit from its ownership. Furthermore, that in Arab tradition since the pre-Islamic period, poetry was usually subject to public competitions and performances without any financial incentives available. The dossier considers various indigenous societies in general and how they need to protect their knowledge, tradition and ceremonies in various ways, and this is another area that I have focused on in some of my published works (see for example, Rikowski, 2005a-b). However, the dossier makes it clear that:

> *...existing intellectual property regimes, and copyright in particular, reinforces the market power of cultural products owned and packaged by large corporations and, in the process, seriously damages creativity and diversity in production in the Arab world* (p.64).

This situation obviously extends to the developing world in general. Furthermore, I would argue that whilst, at the current time, some of this traditional knowledge (TK) might well lie outside of the commodification process, the aims within capitalism will always be to commodify more and more areas of life, and in this regard nothing is sacred in capitalism.

I found it particularly fascinating to read about copyright issues and indigenous populations in regard to the German rock group, 'Enigma', because over the last few years I have very much enjoyed the music of this band. Apparently, Enigma's hit *Return to Innocence*, which sold over 5 million copies world-wide, was not their original work. Instead, it originated from a group of more than 30 indigenous singers from Taiwan, who were invited by the French Ministry of Culture to perform Taiwanese-tribal songs at various concerts across Europe. The French Ministry of Culture liked the songs and recorded them. The dossier explains what subsequently happened, emphasising that under current copyright what transpired was legal "...if morally abhorrent." (p. 66)

The dossier suggests that perhaps what is needed is agreement on how knowledge is used and profits shared, saying that:

> *If we agree that the problem with intellectual property is that it excludes people, then the goal is to avoid reproducing this type of exclusion. The solution we seek is protection from being excluded. Extending the concept of property rights to group rights does not*

make the underlying concept of property any better. The value that should be endorsed consistently across all forms of knowledge is that of non-commodified sharing. It is pernicious to put exchange value over use value and the copyright system puts exchange value over all other values (p.70).

Yes, indeed, we need to look beyond the commodification process – but this is impossible whilst we live in capitalism, I would argue, because the logic of capitalism is the commodification of all that surrounds us (even though this is impossible in reality). To suggest that this might be a possible solution means that one is approaching this topic in rather a simplistic and romantic way, in my view. It is good to see the reference to 'value' here though – obviously a Marxist concept, and also to see the difference between exchange value and use value being highlighted so clearly. Certainly, the copyright system gives priority to exchange value. As I also emphasis in my globalisation book (Rikowski, 2005a), TRIPS places trade and the trading of intellectual property rights, above all other considerations, and it is about transforming intellectual property rights into tradable commodities, which are then exchanged in the market-place – i.e. they have an exchange value. The meaning of value, and the different forms and aspects of value (including use value, exchange value, surplus value and added value) are examined in some detail in a chapter in the forthcoming book that I am editing on Knowledge Management (Rikowski, 2006a) and are considered at a more basic level in a chapter in my globalisation book (Rikowski, 2005a).

There is also an interesting section on the **criminalising of copying** and **piracy**. It is noted that this has been accompanied by a whole array of private bodies and interest groups that have been created by copyright-holding corporations:

> *… who have taken it upon themselves to act as both self-appointed police and 'moral educators'* (p.72).

The dossier says that these groups put fear and guilt into people and:

> *… parents are told that their children need to be watched, in case they turn into hardened criminals in the privacy of their bedrooms; copiers are dubbed 'thieves', and consumers of copied material are accused of helping fund terrorism and organised crime* (p.72).

Once again, this is particularly worrying for those people in the developing world that desperately need to be able to photocopy certain material for educational purposes etc. Disabled people can also greatly suffer in this regard.

There is a section (Section 4) about how **copyright laws and various international conventions and agreements block access to and use of all types of copyrighted works for those in the South.** This includes a consideration of the barriers that have been created to access in the South to educational materials, technical information and knowledge created in the North and the cultural, social and political consequences of the one-way flow of copyrighted works such as books and movies from the North to users in the South. It notes the important role of the librarian in this regard, emphasising that:

> *…attempts to co-opt librarians and information workers in defence of existing copyright regimes should be resisted, at the very least because such a role has the potential to clash with their primary duty to their clients* (p.104).

The dossier also looks at **open source, free software and the creative commons**, emphasising that open source and free software enables "…us to rethink our ideas of property rights…" (p.167). Furthermore, that free software:

> *… constitutes clear and incontestable evidence that the contention that the production of quality software depends on the enforcement of strong copyright, and that innovation depends on patents is wrong. Free Software signs strong copyright away in order to fuel production and innovation and has produced a better product in the process* (p.167).

The **power of conglomerates** in general, on a global basis, is emphasised throughout the dossier. In regard to media conglomerates, it says, for example, that they:

> *…spend large amounts of money and commit significant resources to making sure that the rules and the playing field are designed in such a way as to favour their continued survival and profitability* (p. 27).

Meanwhile, it refers to Western cultural conglomerates in the following way:

> *The main problem is that Western cultural conglomerates are exploiting cultural productions being derived from non-Western cultures while, at the same time, controlling cultural markets all over the world* (p.79).

The dossier also makes its views about organisations such as World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) very clear. It wants to see WIPO abolished and replaced with a new organisation.

> *As more and more activists are beginning to realise, the focus needs to become not on how to take over WIPO – an unlikely scenario indeed – or how to reform it, but rather on how to abolish it and start building a new organisation from the ground up* (p.87).

I very much agree with the main arguments presented in the document, and these arguments are supported with a wealth of very useful and important information, but what is unfortunately missing, as far as I am concerned, is a deeper, more theoretical analysis on the whole subject. So, we do not like the copyright regime as it is currently constituted, and those in the South do, indeed, suffer in particular from it. But why is it constituted this way? Why is there all this copyright legislation and directives that benefits the North but not the South? What is needed is a deeper analysis, in order to be able to uncover, explain and understand what is going on here. This takes us on to the need to analyse global capitalism in general, as far as I am concerned, and in order to do this effectively, we need to return to Marx, and adopt a Marxist analysis to the whole topic. Others might want to start from a different theoretical perspective, but adopting a theoretical analysis is necessary if we are really going to start to begin to understand what is going on here, and start to try to change the tide. Hopefully, this is something that can start to be rectified in the near future.

In conclusion, this dossier provides a very thorough and detailed investigation in regard to copyright issues in the South. It is packed with valuable information, and some of these areas have been highlighted in this review article. I very much agree with many of the main points that are being made throughout the dossier, and greatly appreciate all the work that has been undertaken in this regard. However, I also feel very strongly that the work needs to be placed within a theoretical framework, to ensure that its impact is lasting and so that hopefully, we can actually start to change the situation on a permanent basis. This is also necessary in order to ensure that the report is not interpreted by some as just being a 'big moan' (which is a danger that the left often has to face). Undertaking this analysis and starting to change society will take a long time, but we can begin the process. As such, this dossier has provided a very valuable contribution to the literature in this area. Also, as it is free, there are no copyright restrictions on it and it can be distributed widely, this should mean that many different people will have the opportunity to read it, benefit from it, and start to give further consideration to this important topic.

There is a useful Glossary of Copyright Terms and an index at the end of the book.

This item is available for free either as a printed booklet or as a CD. Distribution is subject to availability. It is not restricted by copyright.

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Open Access: Key Strategic Technical and Economic Aspects

Edited by Neil Jacobs

**Chandos publishing: Oxford, 2006
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Reviewed by Ruth Rikowski

This is a very topical book, covering a subject, Open Access that is increasing in importance on almost a daily basis.

The book opens with a Foreword by Ian Gibson, MP, who chaired the 2004 House of Commons Science and Technology Committee inquiry 'Scientific Publications: free for all?' Gibson says that:

> *The commercial publishing world has an increasingly harmful monopoly on a number of prestige journals which are essential to disseminating new ideas and research. This monopoly over knowledge has been one factor underlying an increase in the price of subscriptions, leaving some academic libraries with no choice but to cancel subscriptions as they can no longer afford to pay for a full range of journals* (p.xi).

It is this type of situation that has lead to the rapid development of open access.

The book includes contributions from a wide range of different people writing on a variety of aspects on open access. In the opening chapter, Alma Swan, for example, refers to the 'Serials Crisis'. Swan emphasises how in recent times, it has not been possible for a university or research institute library to purchase subscriptions to every journal and book that would form an ideal collection for the users of that organisation. Therefore, the benefit of the open access movement is that it is:

> *… dedicated to freeing up research output from the constraints imposed on its dissemination by publisher restrictions and the non-affordability of journals* (p.11).

Meanwhile, **Charles Bailey** considers the definition of open access. He looks, for example, at the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) which emphasises that literature should be freely accessible online. The BOAI recommends 2 complementary strategies for achieving open access to scholarly journal literature. These are self-

archiving and the ability to launch a new generation of journals committed to open access. Bailey notes a number of factors when examining the definition of open access, including the fact that open access works are freely available; secondly, that they are online which means they are digital documents available on the Internet; thirdly that they are scholarly works; fourthly, that authors of these works are not paid for their efforts and fifthly that there are a lot of permitted uses for open access material. Stevan Harnad also examines the definition of open access saying that:

> *… open access means free Webwide access, immediately and permanently, to the full texts of all 2.5 million articles published annually in the planet's 24,000 peer-reviewed research journals across all scholarly and scientific disciplines* (p.73).

Whilst Alma Swan is of the opinion that:

> *… the term open access is a misnomer – though one we are stuck with – for the issue is about enhancing research dissemination and not, primarily, access* (p.67).

In regard to self-archiving, specifically, Bailey points out that self-archiving can be achieved in a number of different ways, including the author's personal website, disciplinary archives, institutional-unit archives and institutional repositories. Approximately, a quarter of all researchers have inserted copies of their articles on their own websites. Arthur Sale says that it is difficult to persuade authors to self-archive, but once they do they find it very beneficial and they do not look back.

The growth in open access is also considered. Andrew Odlyzko points out the fact that it is estimated that the peer-reviewed literature grows by about 2.5 million papers a year, and is published in approximately 25,000 serials. Of these 2.5 million papers, approximately 15% are open access. Also, as Chris Awre says:

> *…technical advances and the underpinning network have opened up the development of new techniques to support scholarly communication. It is likely that such advances will continue and support future scholarly communication and research through open access and collaboration* (p.62).

Meanwhile, Frederick Friend argues that progress towards open access to UK research reports is slow but steady and that:

> *The story of open access in the UK is one of initiatives by organisations and individuals to develop the opportunities provided by new technologies, while the benefits from those initiatives have not been realised by a hesitant government influenced by lobbying from vested interests* (p.161).

Whilst Alma Swan emphasises that:

> *The last couple of years have seen the acceptance of open access as a desirable goal by institutions, research funders, libraries and some publishers, to the point that these parties have taken action towards achieving it* (p.65).

Robert Terry and Robert Kiley consider the Wellcome Trust, which first looked at issues of access to the research literature following concerns raised by the Wellcome Library Advisory Committee in 2001. The Wellcome Trust was the first major UK funding agency to commit to open access. Its reasons are made clear in a 'position statement' on its website, where it says that: "The Wellcome Trust has a fundamental interest in ensuring that the availability and accessibility of this material [i.e. journal articles resulting from Trust-funded research] is not adversely affected by the copyright, marketing and distribution strategies used by publishers."

Colin Steele argues that scholarly publishing is likely to evolve along 2 distinct paths in the future. Firstly, that large multinational commercial publishers will increase their dominance of global science, technology and medicine market, and secondly that a variety of open access initiatives will emerge and become a part of everyday life.

Citations for open access articles are examined in the book. Interestingly, open access articles receive more citations than non-open access articles. As Colin Steele says:

> *Open access, apart from the major considerations of increased access and impact, also allows for the provision of enhanced methods of citation analysis, which can also link into performance indicators, both of researchers and institutions* (p.137).

Meanwhile, Leo Waaijers looks at the Digital Academic Repositories (DARE) Programme in the Netherlands, which is working towards a programme whereby institutions control their own intellectual products whilst also having better access to them. Waaijers says that once the DARE programme is completed, "...The Netherlands will have a robust but elementary infrastructure of institutional repositories." (p.147) Thus, there will no longer be organisational obstacles; instead, the material will be able to be made available far and wide.

Other areas covered in the book include open access and scientific communication (Jean-Claude Guedon), the sustainability of open access (Matthew Cockerill), Internet archiving, creative commons and discussion forums (Peter Suber).

In conclusion, this is a very useful and informative book, covering many different aspects of open access.

There is a detailed bibliography and an index.

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Combining Information and Library work with the Arts and Artistic Creativity, Research and Theory: It *is* all possible!

A focus on Paul Catherall

Ruth Rikowski

Does a Library and Information Professional have to be doomed to stay within a very limited and confined area? I have often asked myself this question over the years, particularly when I worked so closely within the profession. Whilst being convinced that this cannot possibly be true, in a rational sense, my practical experience proved that, in reality, this often seemed to be the case. Such experiences might also help the reader to understand my change in career direction over the last 5 years or so! Yet, libraries, information, books and literature are wonderful - where would we be without them? They offer us the opportunity to lead a richer and a fuller life. So it can be quite disillusioning, I have found, when one comes up against an environment which sometimes seems to be dominated by relatively minor and insignificant issues.

Anyway, what has all this got to do with the title of this piece, one might ask? Paul Catherall is an Information Professional who shows that this richer life is, indeed, possible. By day he works as an Information Professional, as a Web-Developer for the academic library at the North-East Wales Institute (NEWI) of Higher Education. He is also the Web Development Officer for the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) Career Development Group, Wales (CDG Wales)
(See:
http://www.careerdevelopmentgroup.org.uk/divisions/wales/english/committee_members/members.htm).
In addition, Paul is the Web Master for this e-journal, *Information for Social Change* (ISC). ISC is also an organisation in liaison (OiL) with CILIP. (See Paul Catherall's profile in 'Profile for members of ISC Editorial Board' - http://libr.org/isc/profile.html). Yet, Paul also combines his professional work as a library and information web-developer with a wide range of other interests. What are some of these other activities then?

Paul is very keen on writing, publishing, research and the arts. In regard to the arts he is particularly keen on literature and poetry. His first book was published in 2004 on the topic of e-learning. The book is entitled *Delivering E-learning for Information Services in*

Higher Education, published through Chandos Publishing: Oxford. Building on this he has now started studying for a PhD (part-time) at Manchester Metropolitan University on the topic of e-learning and the new and different ways in which students are starting to learn today. The title of his research project is: *What are the skills challenges faced by students in the use of educational technology?: Perceptions of undergraduate students studying professional courses in a part-time, distributed study context.* Furthermore, he also hopes to place his PhD within a theoretical framework, so with this in mind, he is currently exploring Grounded Theory. As he says:

> *Key features of Grounded Theory that interested me included the focus on a 'substantive area' as opposed to a research question or hypothesis and the facility to develop a theory from raw data…*
> (Catherall, 2006c, p.1)

Grounded Theory will enable Paul to keep on open mind about various possible theoretical perspectives, he says, and much to my delight he tells me that this includes the possibility of exploring a Marxist theoretical perspective at some point in the future.
Paul has also written a number of articles, on a variety of themes - see references at the end of this article, for examples of some of these. This includes articles in *Information for Social Change* on topics such as career development in a non-traditional library role, influences on e-learning and writing for the information sector. He has also written a very informative piece on a globalisation, libraries, information and education event that was organised by the Career Development Group Wales (CDG Wales) and ISC at Swansea University in 2005, that I participated in, along with Anneliese Dodds. This has been published in a number of different publications, including *Impact,* the journal of the CILIP Career Development Group (see Catherall, 2006b).

In regard to the arts, much to my initial surprise and delight, a book of Paul's poems with illustrations also by Paul (including a captivating cover), was published earlier this year, with PublishAmerica. These poems were written by Paul over the last 10 years (1995-2005). The poems cover a variety of themes, and they:

> *…deal with a range of themes ranging from the simple to the complex and from the transcendental to the macabre…* (Catherall, 2006a, p.7)

One unifying theme that runs through them all though, I think, is the way in which the poet compares and contrasts urban life with nature and rural life. Living in North Wales, Paul must feel very close to nature himself in many ways, I am sure. I was very moved by this little book, so much so, that I wrote two reviews of it – one for Amazon.co.uk and Amazon.com and another for this issue of ISC. Glenn Rikowski also inserted an entry on his web-log about it

(See: http://journals.aol.co.uk/rikowskigr/Volumizer/entries/1029). Thus, poetry and the arts (Paul also has a BA in English Literature with Media Studies) is clearly something that means a lot to Paul and is something that very much inspires and delights him. I am sure that it also helps him with his day-to-day work as well as with his wider research agenda. Drawing on the expertise that Paul has gained from his web work, Paul has also set-up a website for his book of poems – see: http://poetry.draigweb.co.uk.

So, the arts help us to live a rich and rewarding life, but the arts will always struggle to survive in capitalism, it seems to me. Money cannot easily be made from the arts, and the arts cannot readily be transformed into saleable, tradable commodities. Indeed, it is fascinating to realise the extent to which the genius Mozart himself seemed to feel this. In a letter that Mozart wrote to an Italian friend on 4th September 1776, he said:

> *Most beloved and esteemed signor, I beg you to tell me what you think of my most humble music. We live in a world where the arts should be encouraged so that we may enlighten one another. But in the country where I live music must struggle even to exist* (Mozart, 1776).

Yet Paul, in his own small way, is helping people to appreciate the arts more, and is doing a little to help to overcome the fact that he thinks that poetry is sadly in decline.

Thus, Paul Catherall can be an inspiration to us all, I think, or at least to those of us that want to live a richer, deeper and a more rewarding life in general, and in particular, to those of us that want to show that the library and information profession can be a rich and rewarding experience, and does not have to be confined within narrow walls.

Life is for living – let us embrace it, and not limit ourselves in unnecessary ways. As ever, let us look towards a better future and a brighter and a fairer world. Also, let us look towards a world where humans can find fulfilment and self-expression and where the arts can be more fully embraced. But meanwhile, let us also aim to live a rich and fulfilling life through the arts, as much as we are able to, whilst living within the capitalist confines that we currently have to operate in.

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Paul Catherall's websites

Paul Catherall's website for his poetry book, *Foibles, Frolics and Phantasms: illustrated poems (1995-2005)* See http://poetry.draigweb.co.uk

E-Learning Information Portal, maintained by Paul Catherall –
See: http://elearning.draigweb.co.uk

Paul Catherall's Research Home Page for Manchester Metropolitan University.
See: http://draigweb.co.uk/elearning/

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Note: A shorter version of this biographical article first appeared in *Managing Information*, June 2006 (Vol.13 No.5), pp.6-7.

The All Rounder (The Centre of Everything)

Gregory Rikowski

People who are embraced by religion
The one who makes us have perfect vision
The person to only which they listen
The one who creates us as an organism.

The people who take their lives as they come
The commoner, the one who enjoys leisure
Not realising why they are here
They only seek to socialise with perfect pleasure.

One with nature is aware of themselves
Thinking at a different level
Seeing the world for what it is
Not believing in extreme views of the devil.

The all rounder does not embrace these
It is not what they see as progression
The way that they show appreciation
The feeling of an appreciation session.

Embracing these brings limited possibilities
It is certainly not in the all rounder's interest
The one who sees all of these as generosities
To appreciate them will bring up a warming chest.

The all rounder neither accepts nor denies
Nor loves nor hates these qualities.
Nature, religion and commoners are important
To the all rounder they all share equal possibilities.

The qualities that an all rounder has
The feelings and emotions of religion
The life essence of nature
Skills of a commoner, the simple world vision.

The commoner is blind
A nature person detached
The spiritual one unwise
They neither have the balance to catch.

Only know the basic knowledge of these
The brain has limitations

Only a small part of each is needed
The all rounder has clear interpretations.

The one who does not have extreme opinions
The one who cannot use his attachment against opposition
The all rounder chooses ones own route
The ego path of others not making a balanced decision.

The all rounder does not have clear ideas
For the answer to life cannot be seen
To fight for the answer of life cannot be certain
Why become so full of your extreme?

This is not a dual the all rounder will take part
If you turn extreme you will be taken apart
The essence of who you will depart
The body you have will be shaken.

To the all rounder is something very unique
The reflection in the mirror enabling the one to feel
The one I have witnessed once
In the mirror the essence not turning to steel.

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Gregory Rikowski is a student at Epping Forest College, Loughton, Essex. He was 16 years old when he wrote this poem. More of Gregory's poems can be viewed at The Flow of Ideas web site, at:
http://www.flowideas.co.uk/?page=articles&sub=Poems%20by%20Gregory%20Rikowski

The Ideal World

Gregory Rikowski

The world we live is full of reality
The systems the people we share
The small world using its full capacity
People not realising their worth, believing not to care.

The status and class is something to be focused
The jobs and leisures of many
Capital is the disaster we live in
People not thinking in the same way or of any.

Using our knowledge we can look for solutions
For the world is a big influence on our minds
The greed and selfishness it creates
The world against our nature, together we can combine.

The value of family could be higher
Destruction and war has risen
The value of life could be so much tighter.
People turning into statues following others decisions.

Influencing corrupted minds into disaster
Humanity only follows others we see
Think for yourselves and be human faster
Hope is almost gone, letting our brains flee.

The world in the future that may come
Humanity is something of falseness, people are blind
The hopeless vision awareness of some
The world of equality is the one of kind.

The power and control is what people seek
The influence of this place
The intelligence of us washing every year, leak after leak.
The world of capital the ugly side of the face.

The solution to escape from this madness
Use your wisdom, be brave
The way out gives us fulfillment
Do not be tormented into becoming a slave.

Science and philosophy shall join
Reality and mind is the way

Not making the choice of flipping the right side of the coin
The life for us will be great and we shall see another day.

Using our reason we can see
The correct balance of science and wisdom
The way of success of us that is meant to be
The minds of us created, to be more human.

Courage must be full
We all need a push in the right direction
Communism is one of no control power
No foolish irrational actions of segregation.

The world treating us as slaves of the system
If your mind is strong enough you can resist
You can decide for yourself what you want to be
The people in the system, characters can twist.

Creating us to be better people
Not drifting off into fantasy or reality
Have the perfect balance
This is the key for true faculty.

But it may too late for we have already been sucked in
Becoming future robots, hope is thin
Sometime in the future
The decision of humanity will be decided within.

© Copyright, **Gregory Rikowski** 11th April 2006

Gregory Rikowski is a student at Epping Forest College, Loughton, Essex. He was 16 years old when he wrote this poem. More of Gregory's poems can be viewed at The Flow of Ideas web site, at:
http://www.flowideas.co.uk/?page=articles&sub=Poems%20by%20Gregory%20Rikowski

Epilogue: Education beyond Retromodernism, and Towards Really Useful Workers' Knowledge

Glenn Rikowski

The late Basil Bernstein once said, though I cannot remember where, even though over the years I have heard it many times, that: 'education cannot compensate for society'. Furthermore, as Singer and Pezone (2003) point out, in 1897 the classical French sociologist Emile Durkheim 'rejected the idea that education could be the force to transform society' (p.1). However, this Special Issue was produced on the basis that whilst education on its own could not transform society it nevertheless would be a vital ingredient in any project for progressive social change. This is certainly the case in contemporary Cuba where education is playing a key role in the country's socialist project (see Ridenour, 2006). As Dr Luis Gomez, Minister of Education for Cuba explained at the World Conference on Basic Literacy Training, held in Havana in February 2005:

> The idea is to reach everybody, that no-one is ever abandoned or unattended. Education reaches everyone from early childhood and throughout life, excluding no-one. We pin our hopes on this utopia and the results we have obtained breathe life into our optimism. We are building the fairest, most equal society that has ever been known to the history of humankind (Ridenhour, 2006).

To write off education as a crucial factor in a project for social transformation is, on the Cuban experience, not just short-sighted and pessimistic but practically naïve.

The same point is made by Keith Flett (2006) who argues for a reconsideration of an idea first advanced by historian Richard Johnson 30 years ago: that education should provide 'really useful workers' knowledge'. Flett points out that New Labour started off by raising some useful questions (e.g. about working class educational failure) but came up with answers that ceded ever more control of education to business interests. In the terms I described this phenomenon in the *Editorial*, New Labour invariably came up with retro-modern solutions. Flett argues for the need to ditch New Labour's retromodernism and build on the work of Johnson. Really useful workers' knowledge includes 'spearhead knowledge': which is 'everything from the labour theory of value to the need for a radical working class press' (Ibid.). Furthermore, Flett argues that although structures are important, a project for radical social and educational change requires a curriculum that opens up young and adult minds to these issues.

Thus, in various ways, we need to go beyond retromodernist educational policies, practices and processes. In an article I wrote a couple of years ago (Rikowski, 2004), I attempted a much fuller and more historical account of education for progressive social change (i.e. socialism) than that presented in my article for this Special Edition. However, that 2004 article lacked a cutting edge. Looking back, it did not provide the killer argument regarding why education should be a *necessary* aspect of any serious socialist politics. What I was concerned with above all here was to try to convince that in a politics of social transformation, despite what Bernstein and Durkheim have said, education has a vital role to play. In their various ways, all the articles, dialogues and interviews in this Special Issue consolidate or expand or touch on this view.

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